CN
CARTOON NETWORK

OVER THE GARDEN WALL.

SOULFUL SYMPHONIES

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kaboom!™

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OVER THE GARDEN WALL.

SOULFUL SYMPHONIES

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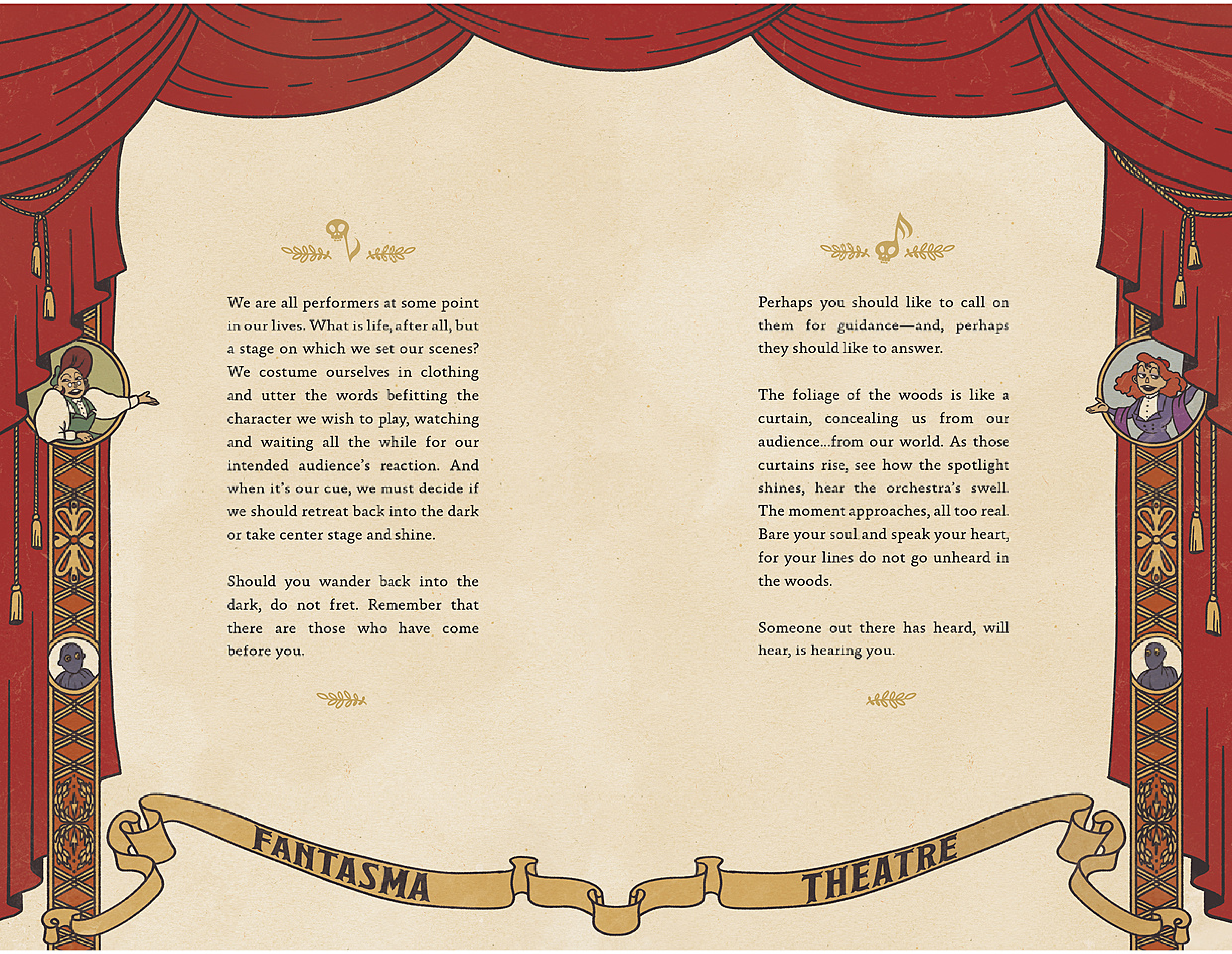


We are all performers at some point in our lives. What is life, after all, but a stage on which we set our scenes? We costume ourselves in clothing and utter the words befitting the character we wish to play, watching and waiting all the while for our intended audience's reaction. And when it's our cue, we must decide if we should retreat back into the dark or take center stage and shine.

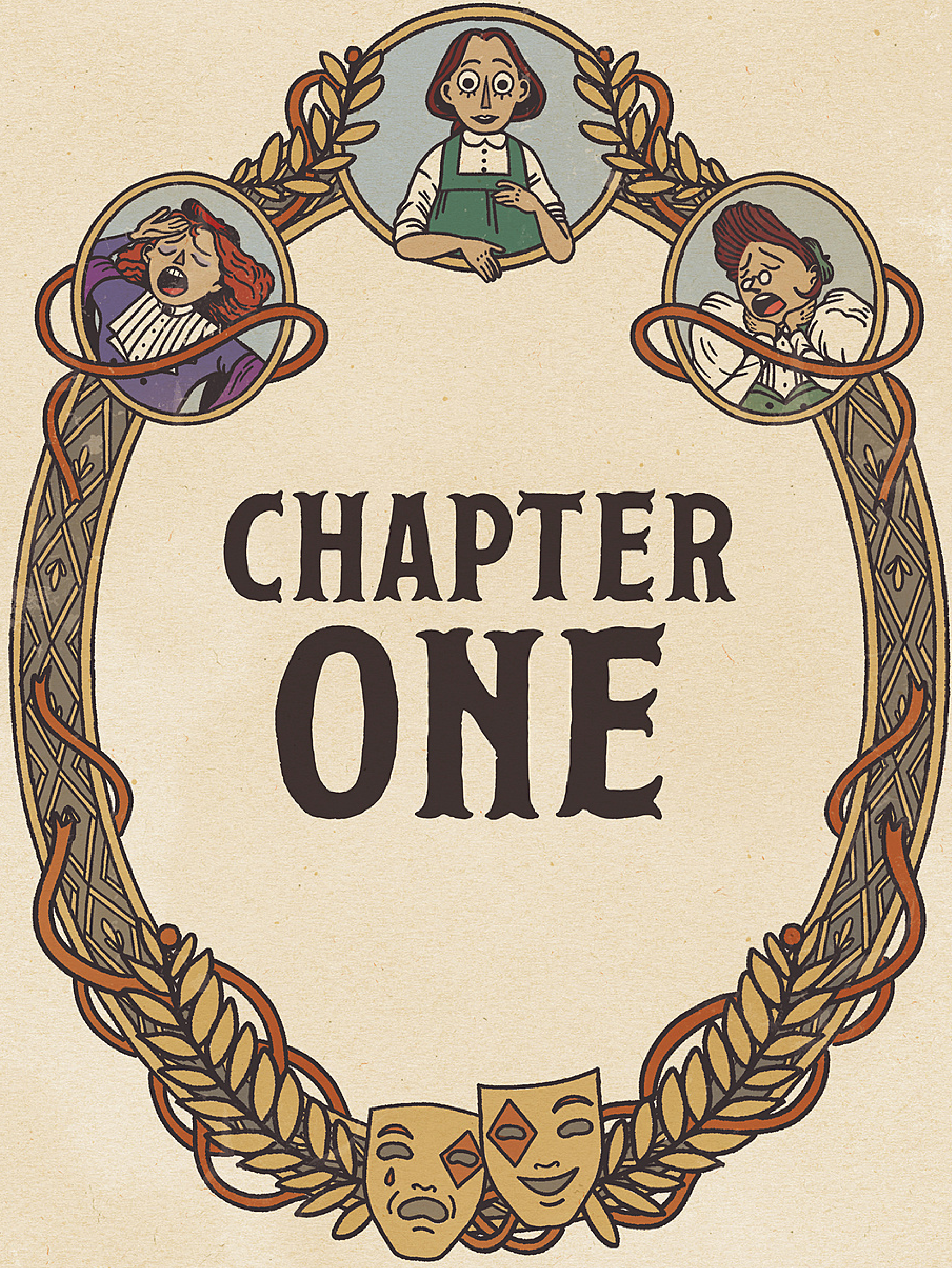
Should you wander back into the dark, do not fret. Remember that there are those who have come before you.

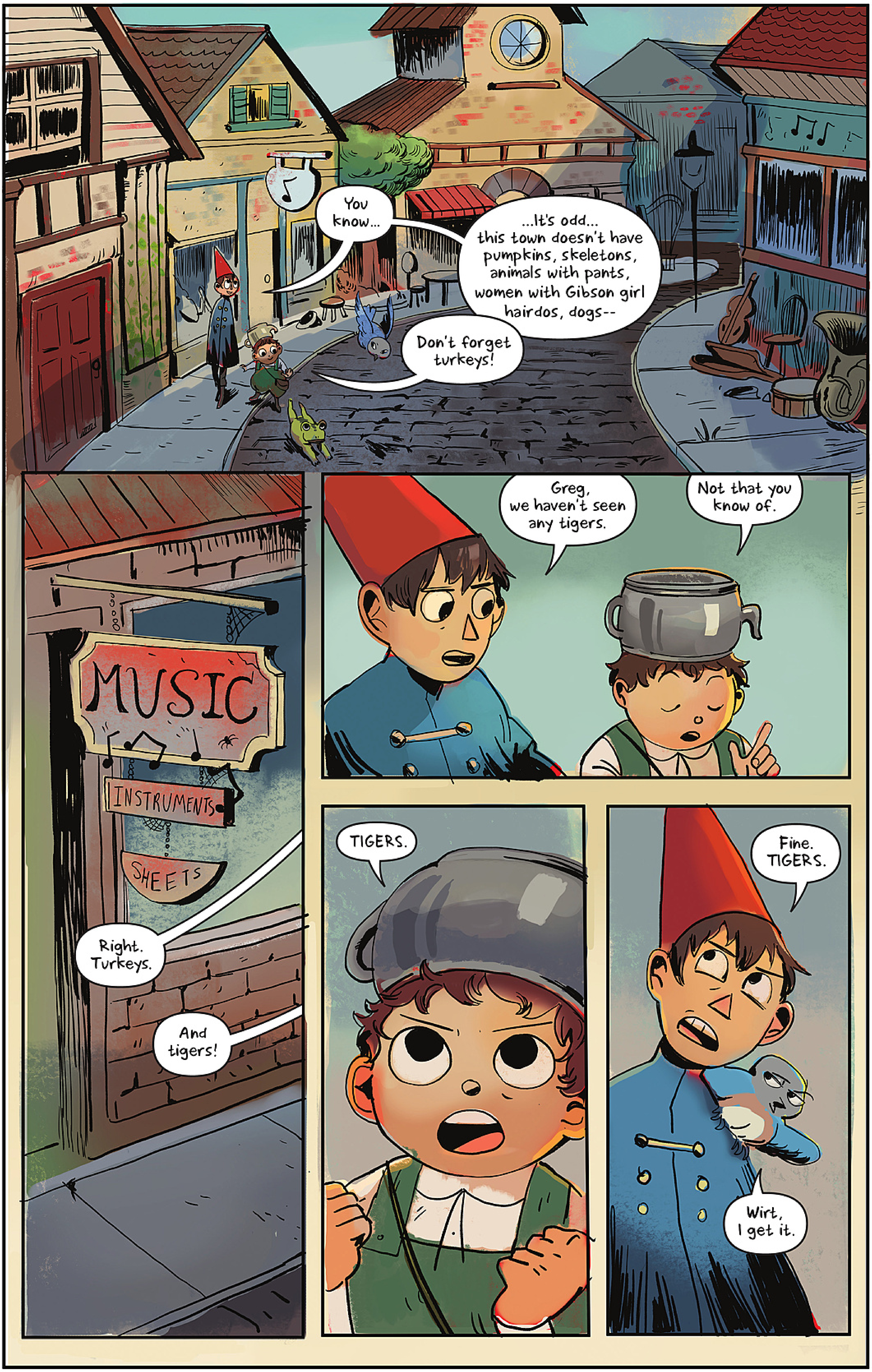
Perhaps you should like to call on them for guidance—and, perhaps they should like to answer.

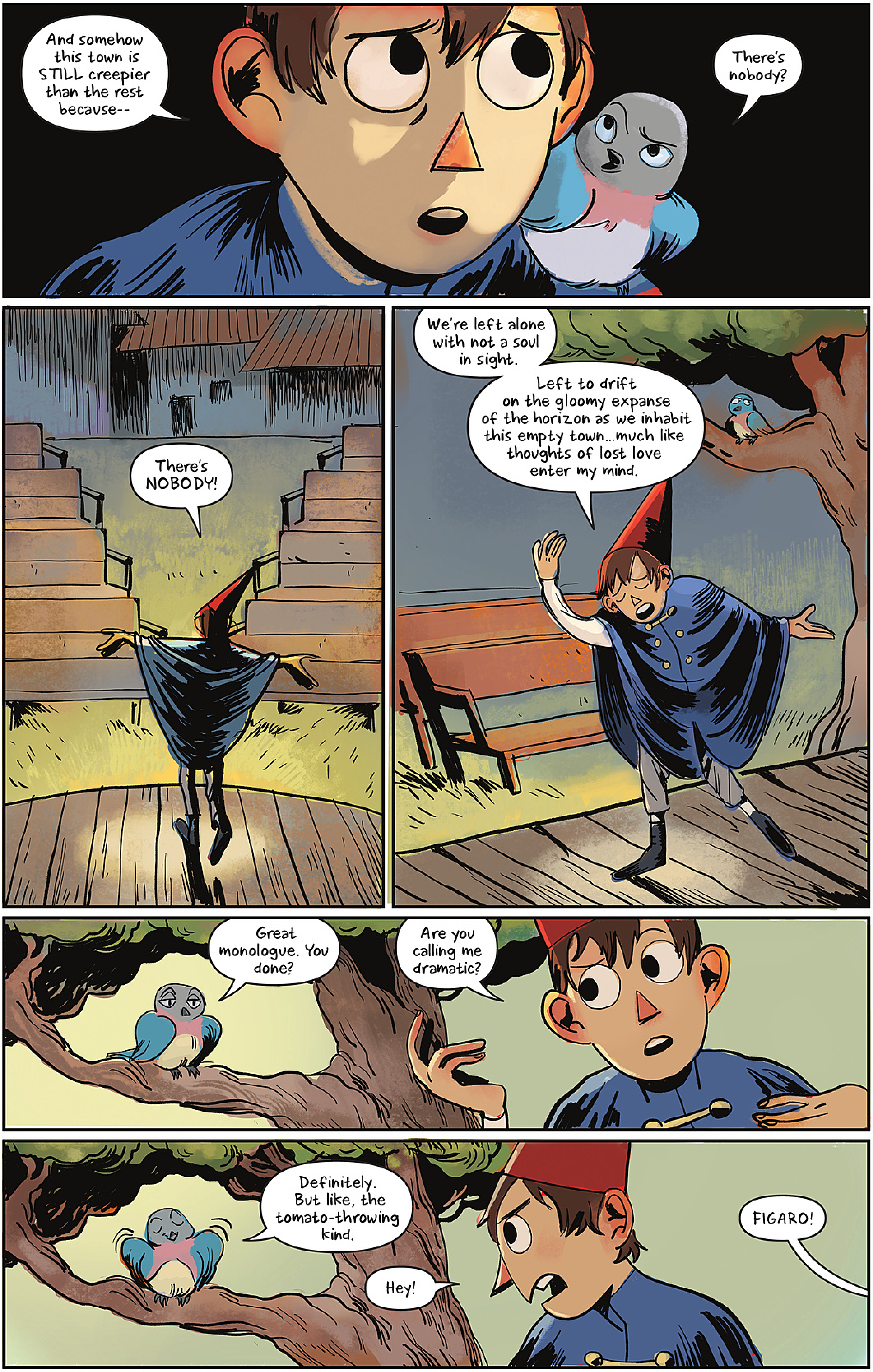
The foliage of the woods is like a curtain, concealing us from our audience...from our world. As those curtains rise, see how the spotlight shines, hear the orchestra's swell. The moment approaches, all too real. Bare your soul and speak your heart, for your lines do not go unheard in the woods.

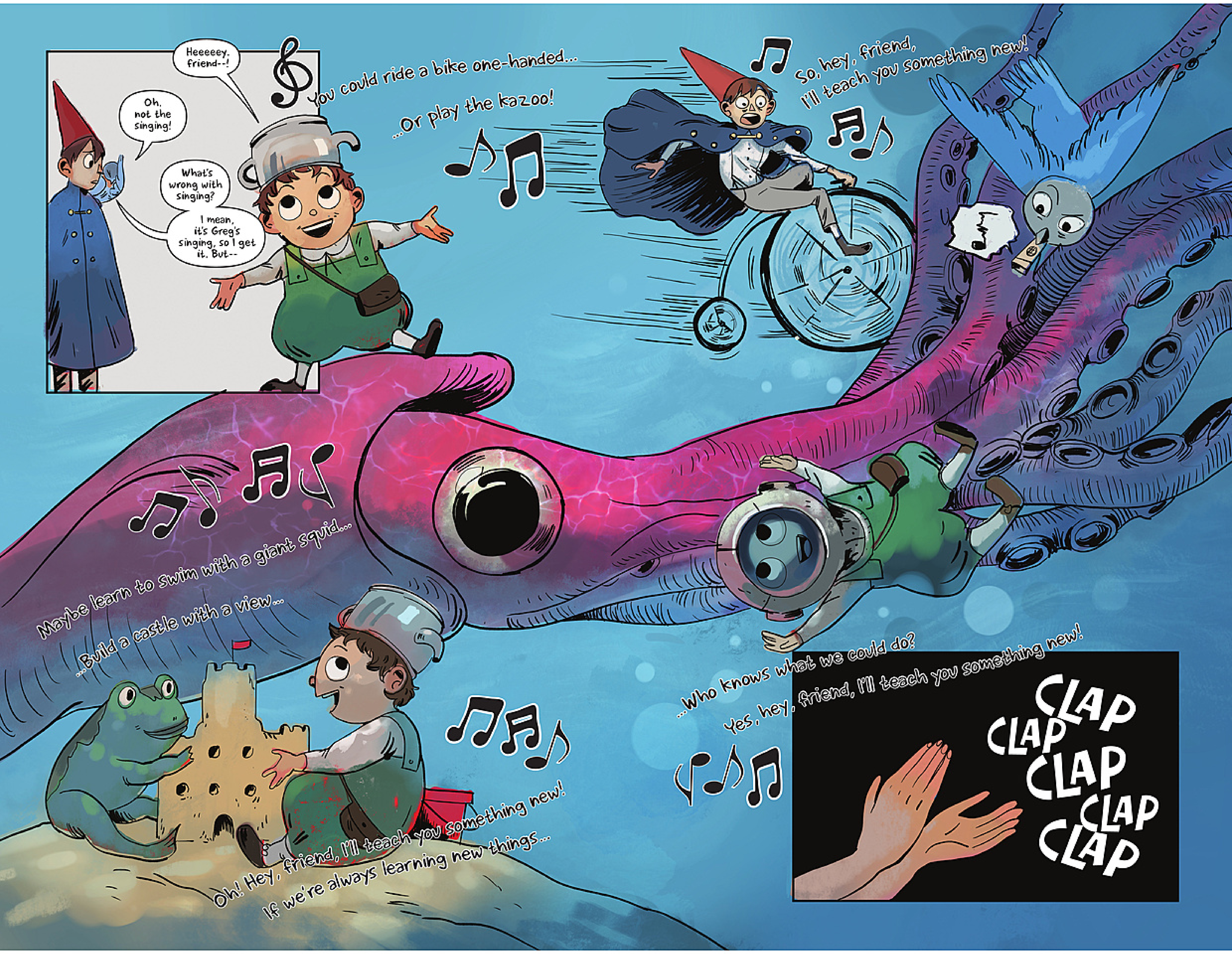
Someone out there has heard, will hear, is hearing you.

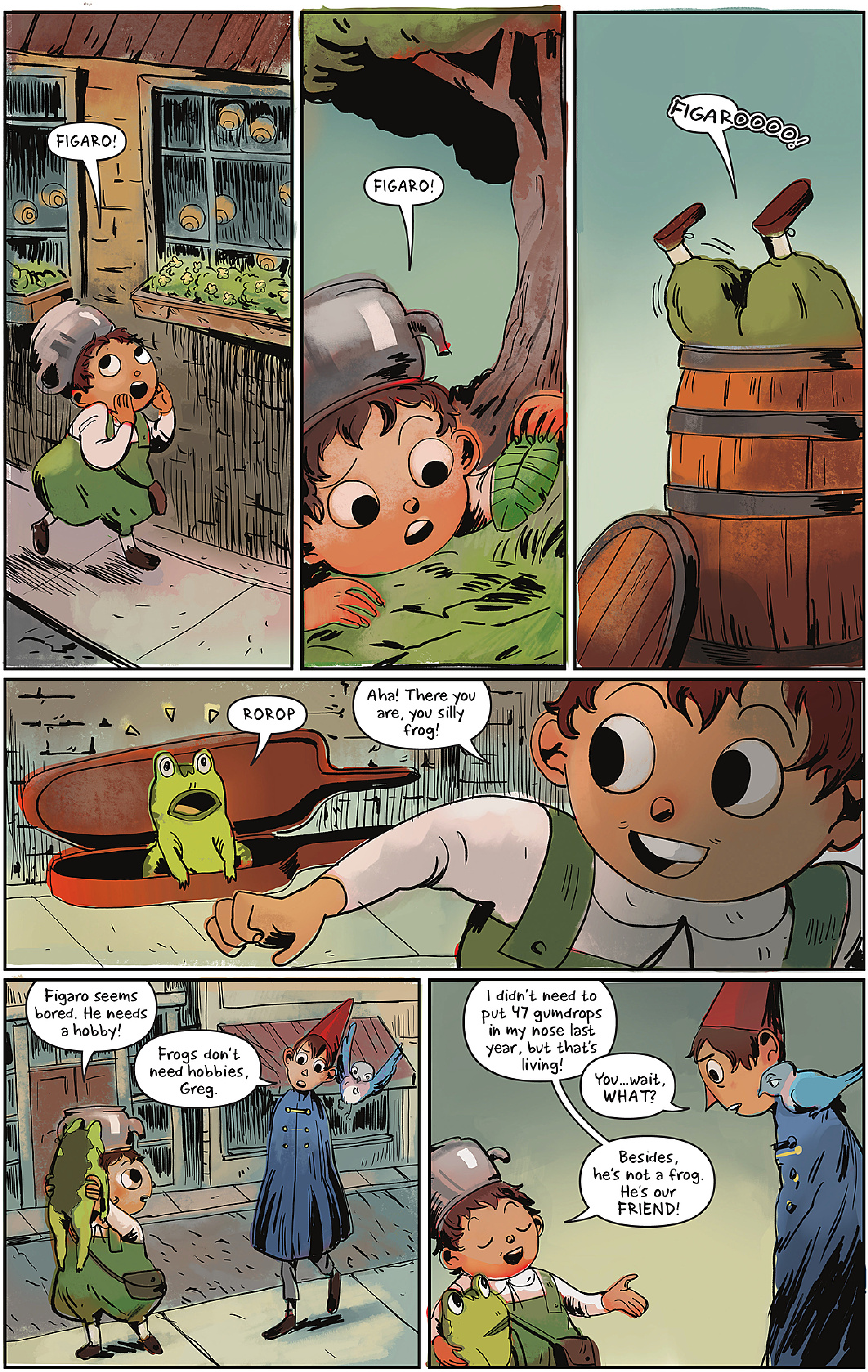
CHAPTER ONE

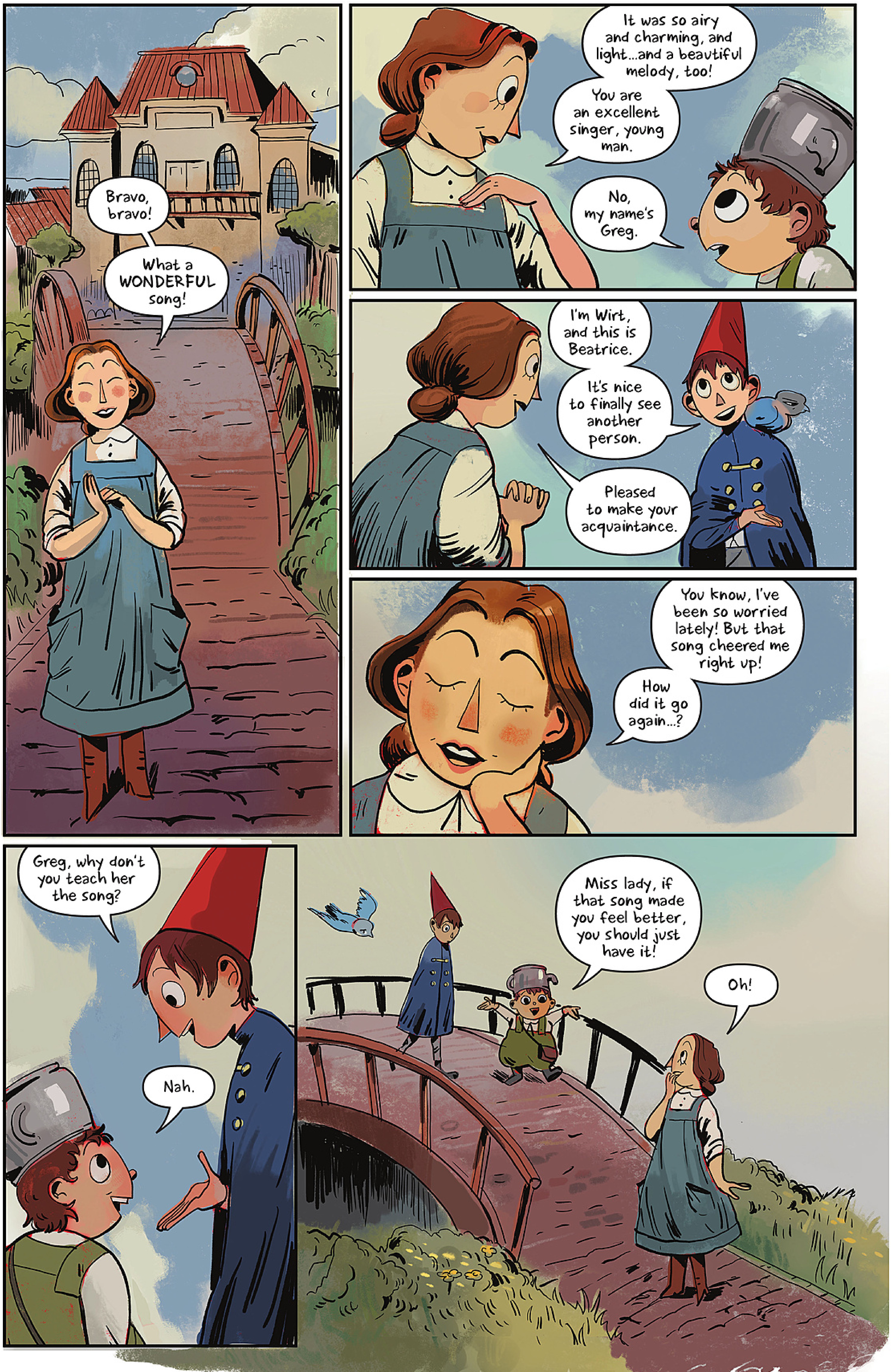


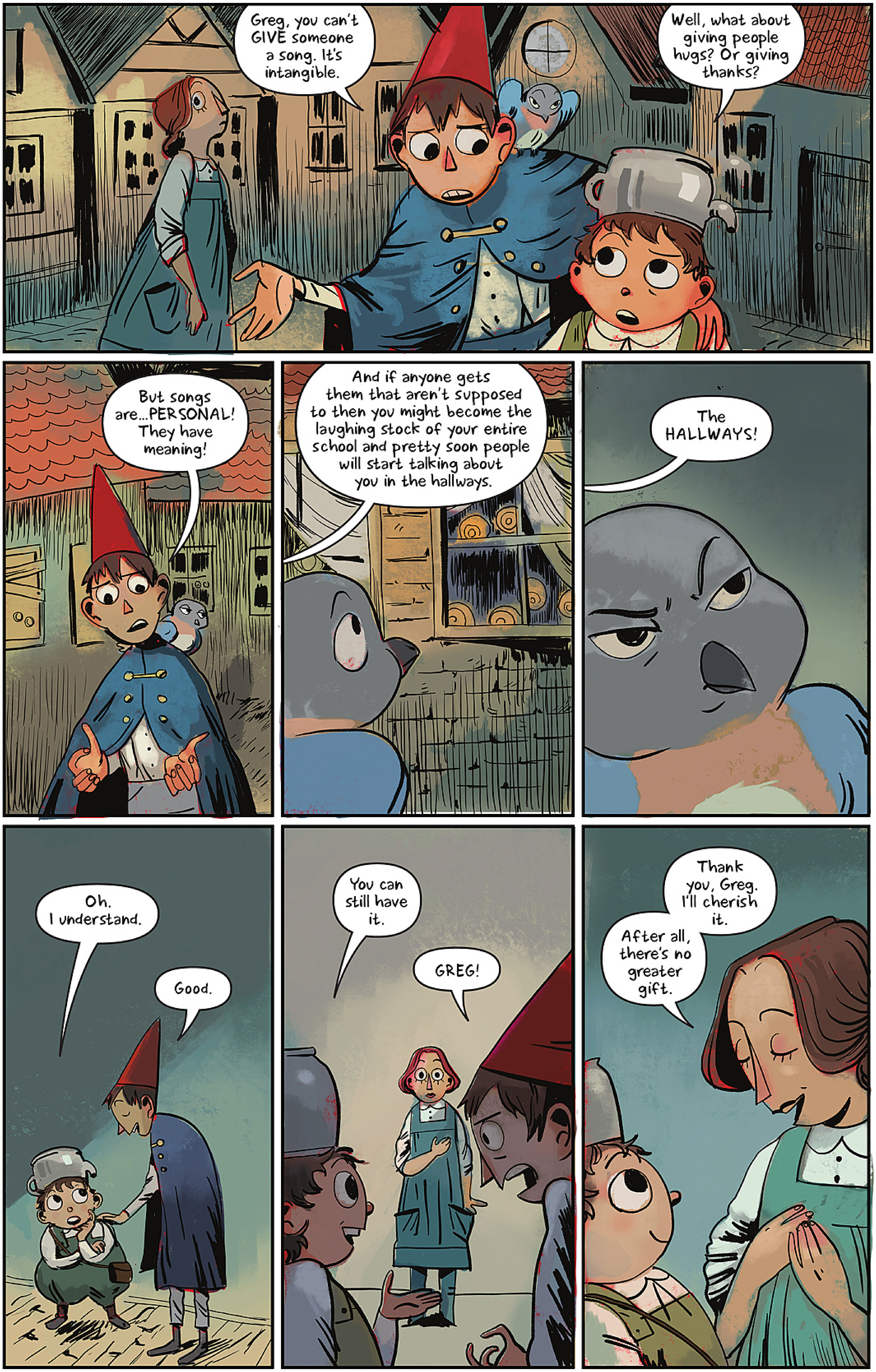

You know...
...It's odd... this town doesn't have pumpkins, skeletons, animals with pants, women with Gibson girl hairdos, dogs--
Don't forget turkeys!
MUSIC
INSTRUMENTS
SHEETS
Right. Turkeys.
And tigers!
Greg, we haven't seen any tigers.
Not that you know of.
TIGERS.
Fine. TIGERS.
Wirt, I get it.

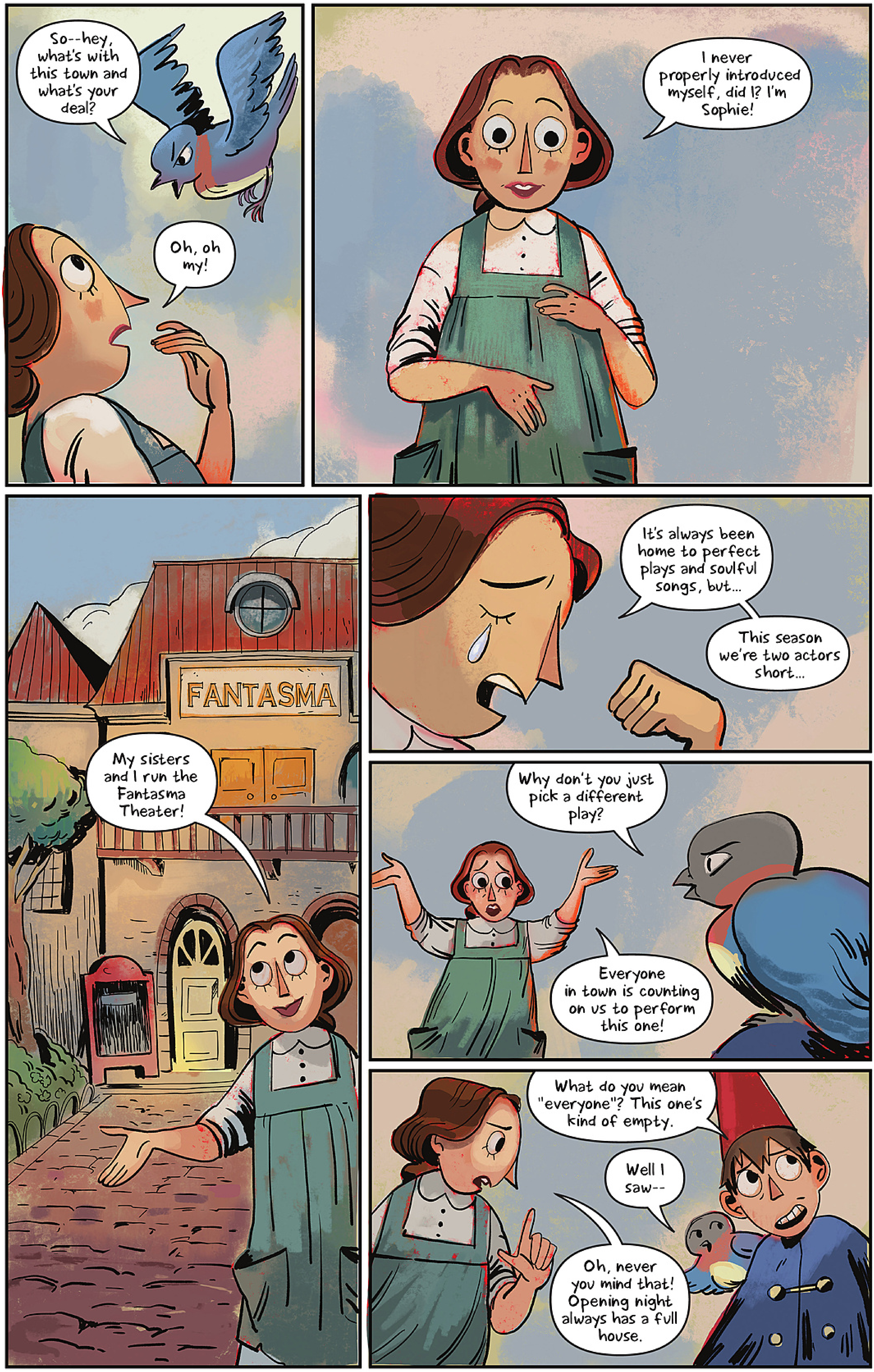

And somehow this town is STILL creepier than the rest because--
There's nobody?
There's NOBODY!
We're left alone with not a soul in sight.
Left to drift on the gloomy expanse of the horizon as we inhabit this empty town...much like thoughts of lost love enter my mind.
Great monologue. You done?
Are you calling me dramatic?
Definitely. But like, the tomato-throwing kind.
Hey!
FIGARO!

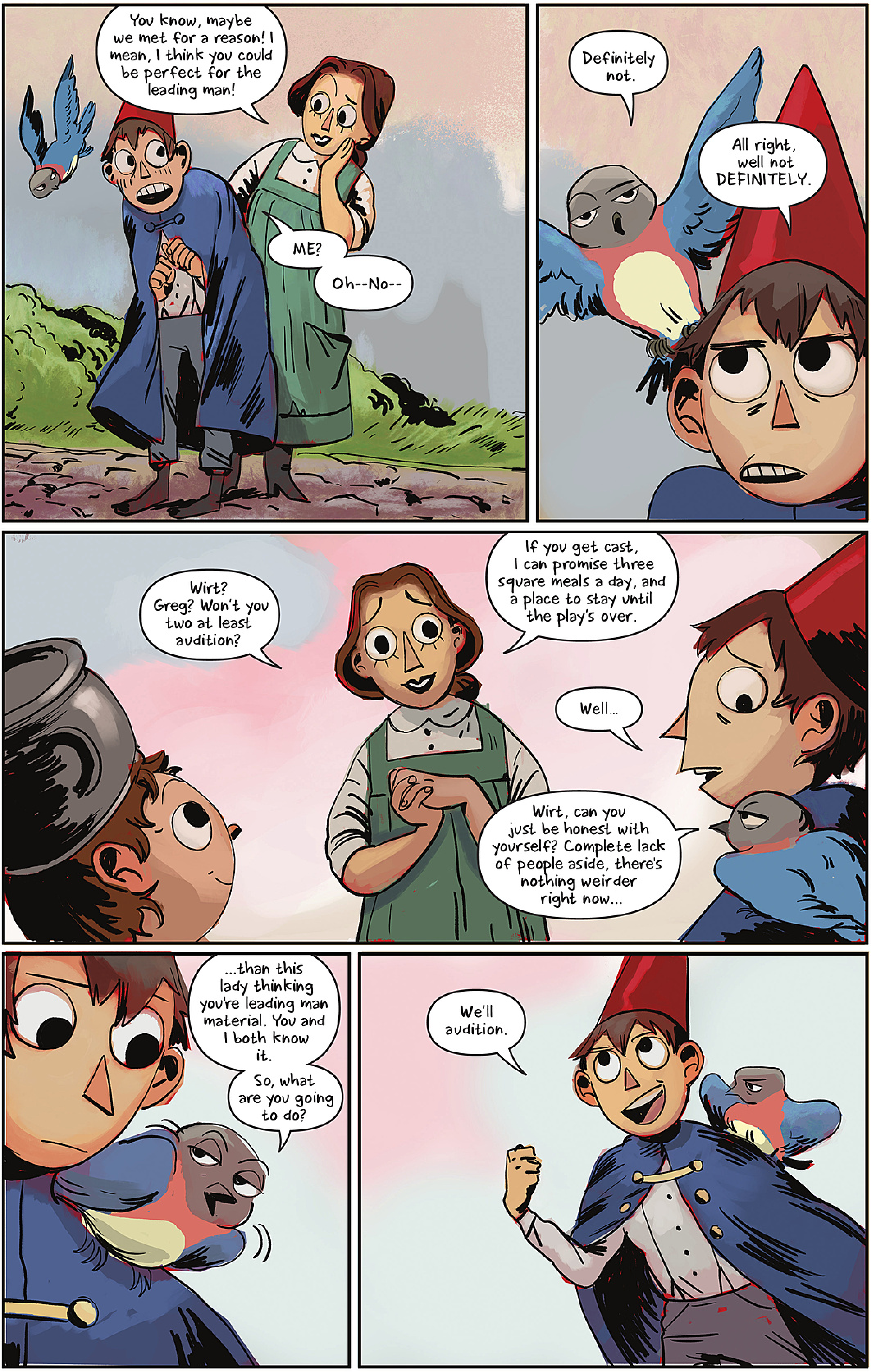

Heeeeey, friend--!
Oh, not the singing!
What's wrong with singing?
I mean, it's Greg's singing, so I get it. But--
You could ride a bike one-handed...
...Or play the kazoo!
So, hey, friend, I'll teach you something new!
Maybe learn to swim with a giant squid...
...Build a castle with a view...
Oh! Hey, friend, I'll teach you something new!
If we're always learning new things...
...Who knows what we could do?
Yes, hey, friend, I'll teach you something new!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

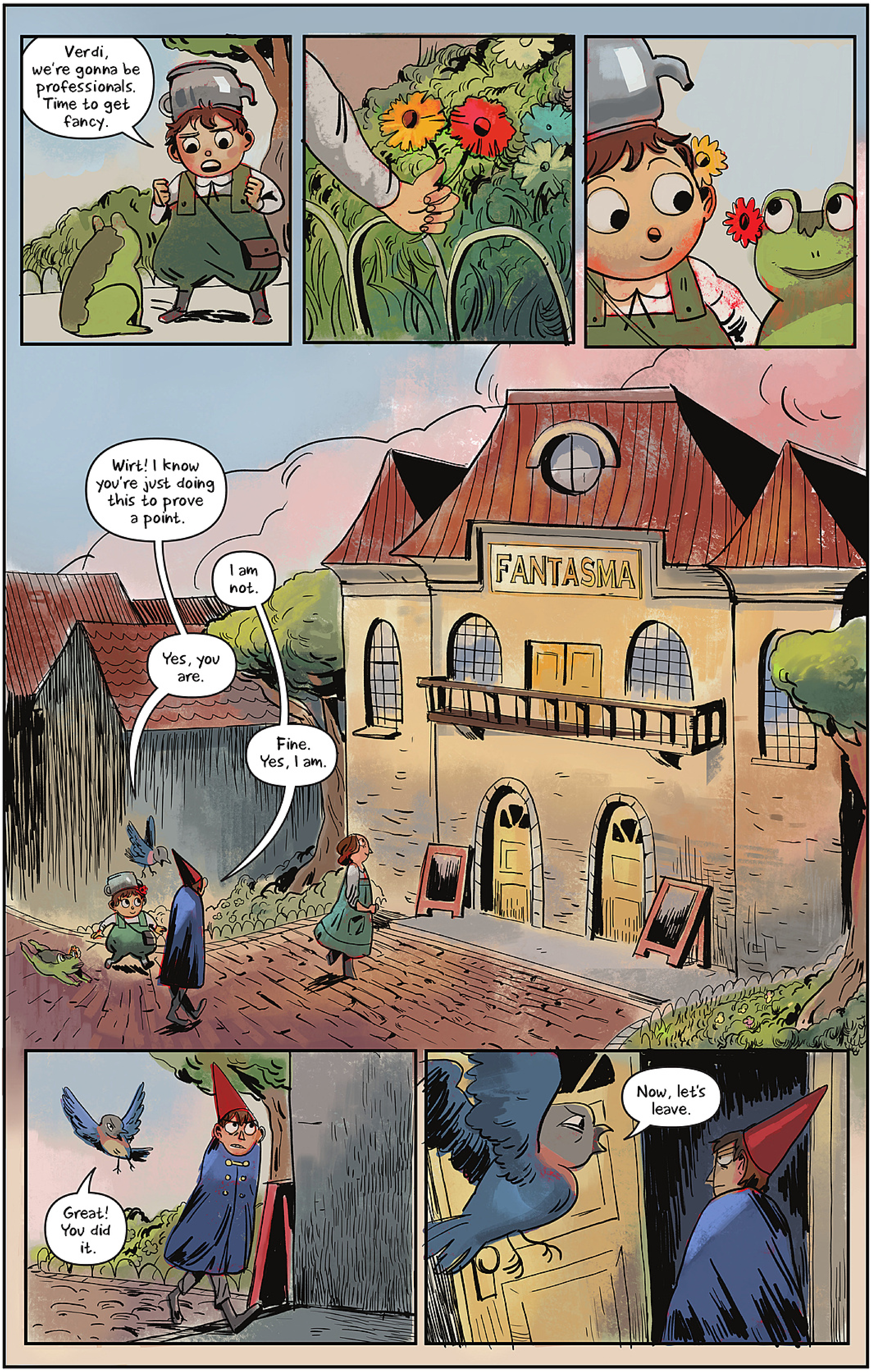

FIGARO!
FIGARO!
FIGAROOOO!
ROROP
Aha! There you are, you silly frog!
Figaro seems bored. He needs a hobby!
Frogs don't need hobbies, Greg.
I didn't need to put 47 gumdrops in my nose last year, but that's living!
You...wait, WHAT?
Besides, he's not a frog. He's our FRIEND!

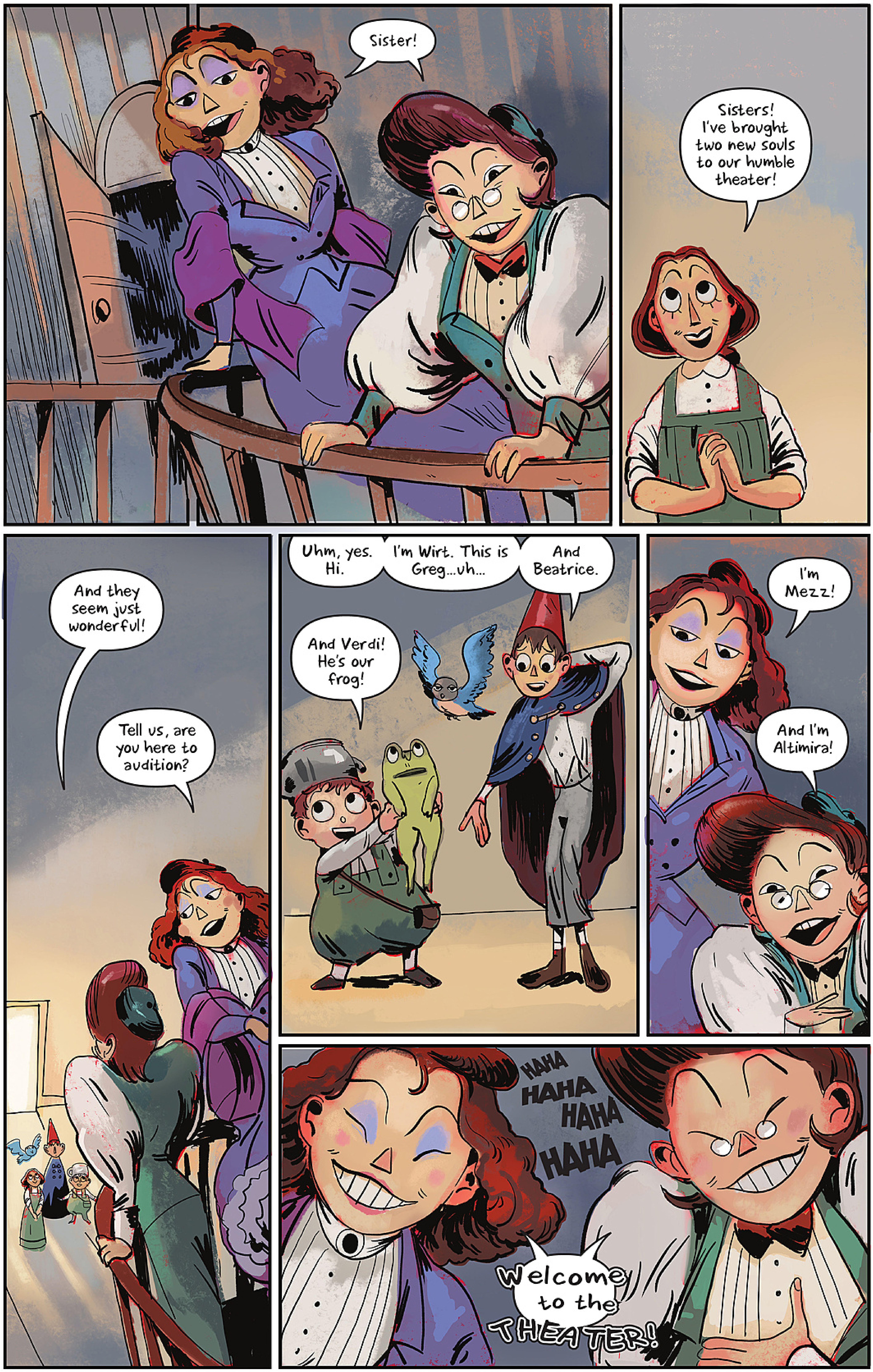

Bravo, bravo!
What a WONDERFUL song!
It was so airy and charming, and light...and a beautiful melody, too!
You are an excellent singer, young man.
No, my name's Greg.
I'm Wirt, and this is Beatrice.
It's nice to finally see another person.
Pleased to make your acquaintance.
You know, I've been so worried lately! But that song cheered me right up!
How did it go again...?
Greg, why don't you teach her the song?
Nah.
Miss lady, if that song made you feel better, you should just have it!
Oh!

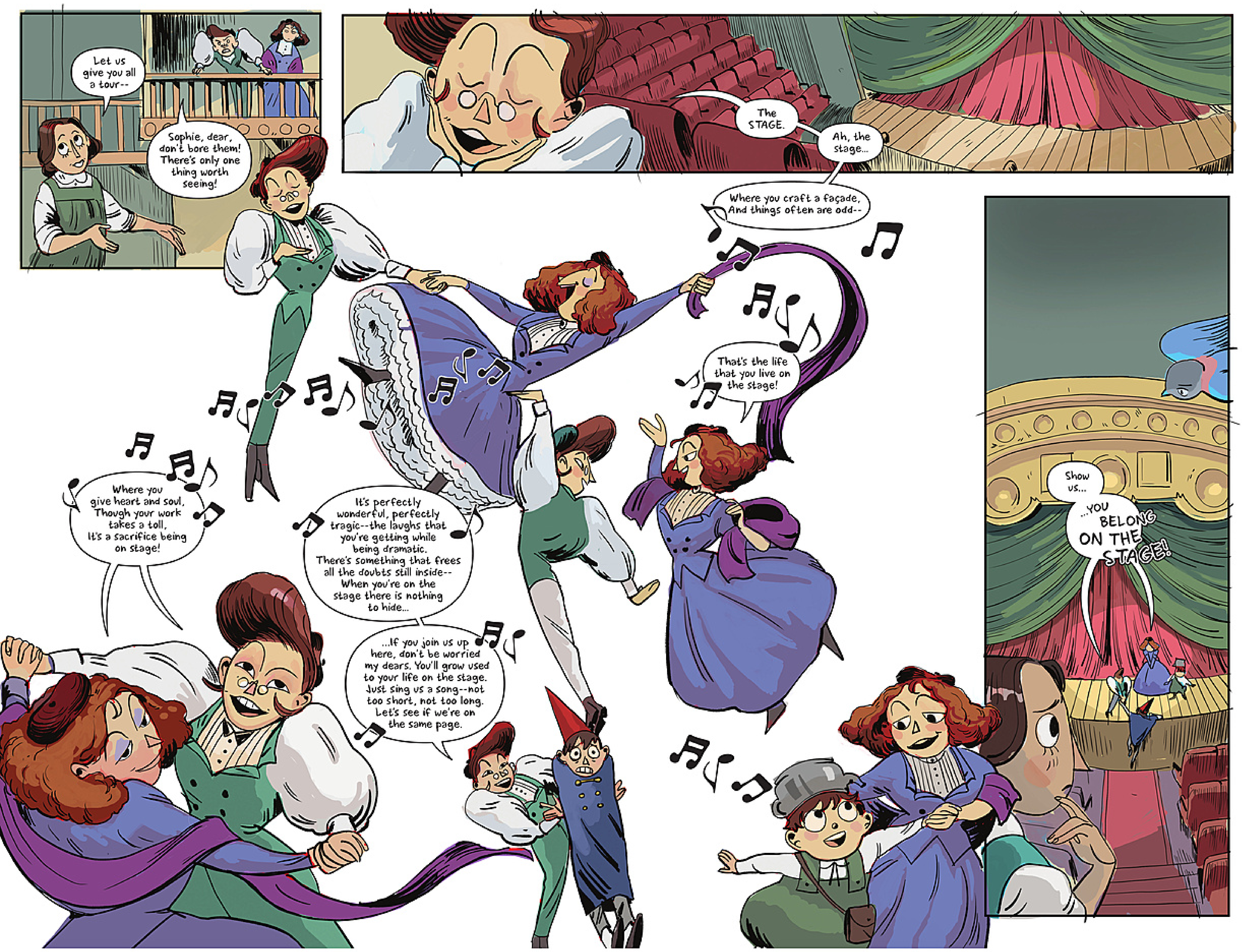

Greg, you can't GIVE someone a song. It's intangible.
Well, what about giving people hugs? Or giving thanks?
But songs are...PERSONAL! They have meaning!
And if anyone gets them that aren't supposed to then you might become the laughing stock of your entire school and pretty soon people will start talking about you in the hallways.
The HALLWAYS!
Oh. I understand.
Good.
You can still have it.
GREG!
Thank you, Greg. I'll cherish it.
After all, there's no greater gift.

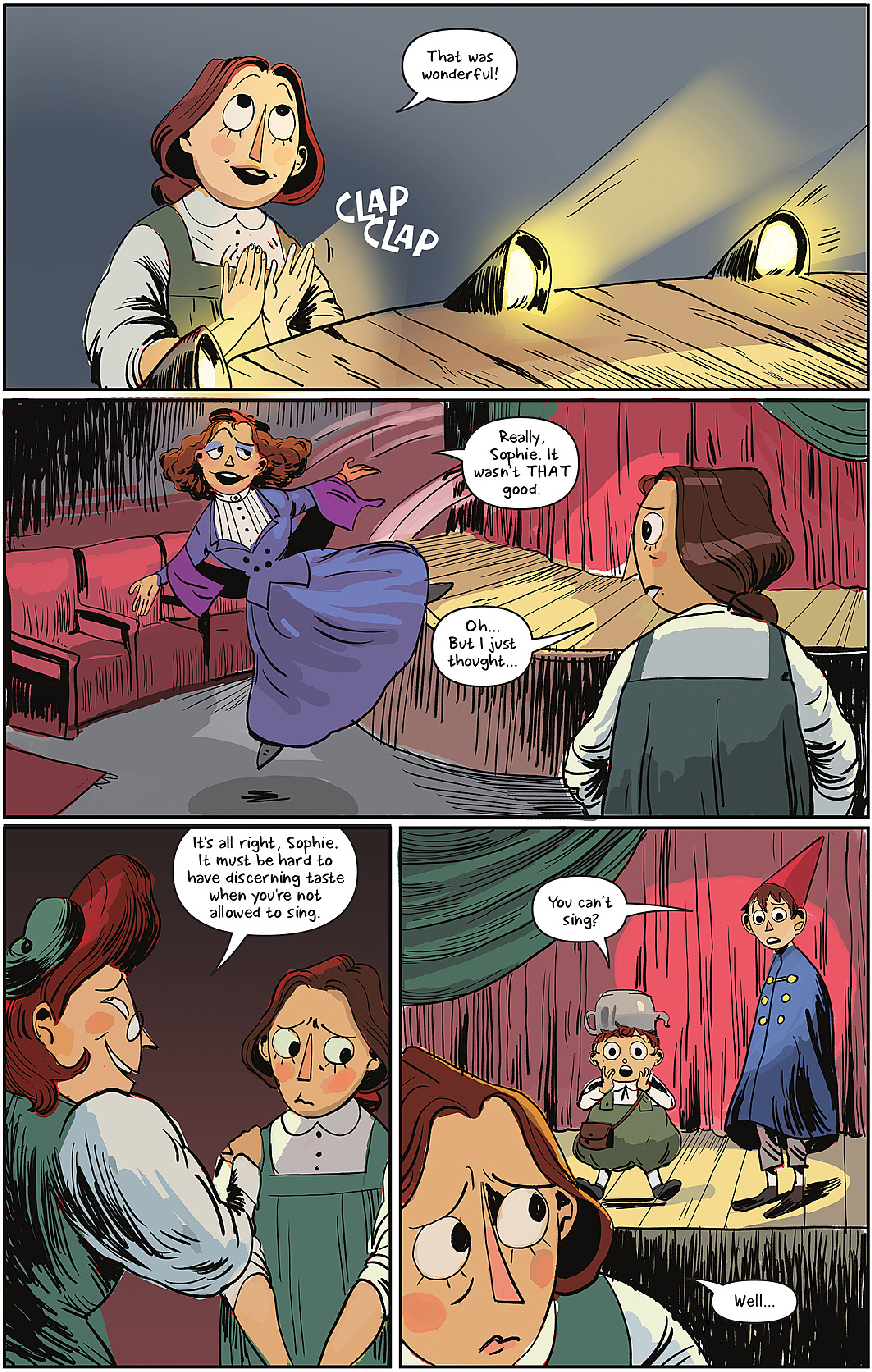

So--hey, what's with this town and what's your deal?
Oh, oh my!
I never properly introduced myself, did I? I'm Sophie!
My sisters and I run the Fantasma Theater!
FANTASMA
It's always been home to perfect plays and soulful songs, but...
This season we're two actors short...
Why don't you just pick a different play?
Everyone in town is counting on us to perform this one!
What do you mean "everyone"? This one's kind of empty.
Well I saw--
Oh, never you mind that! Opening night always has a full house.

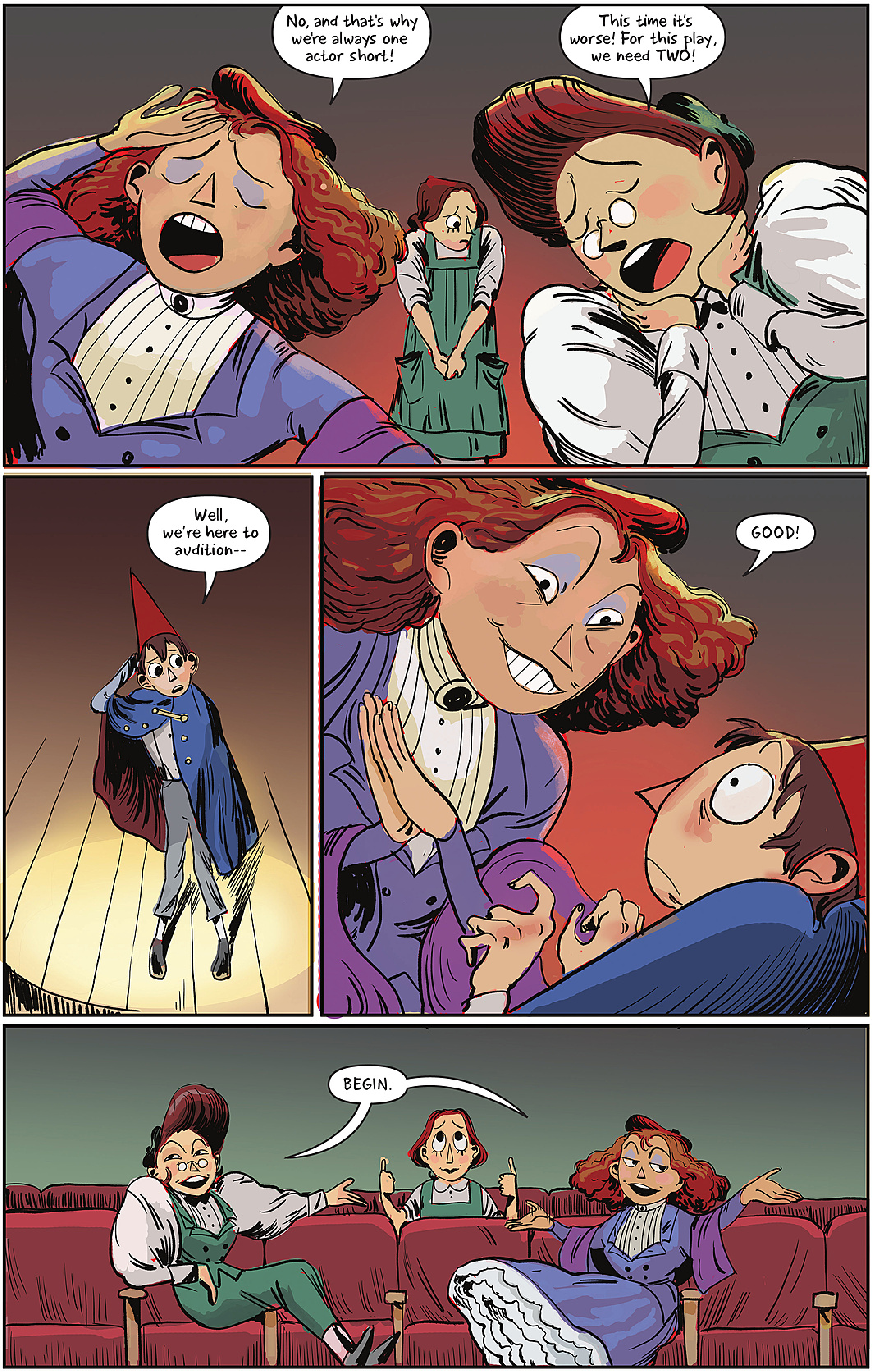

You know, maybe we met for a reason! I mean, I think you could be perfect for the leading man!
ME?
Oh--No--
Definitely not.
All right, well not DEFINITELY.
Wirt? Greg? Won't you two at least audition?
If you get cast, I can promise three square meals a day, and a place to stay until the play's over.
Well...
Wirt, can you just be honest with yourself? Complete lack of people aside, there's nothing weirder right now...
...than this lady thinking you're leading man material. You and I both know it.
So, what are you going to do?
We'll audition.

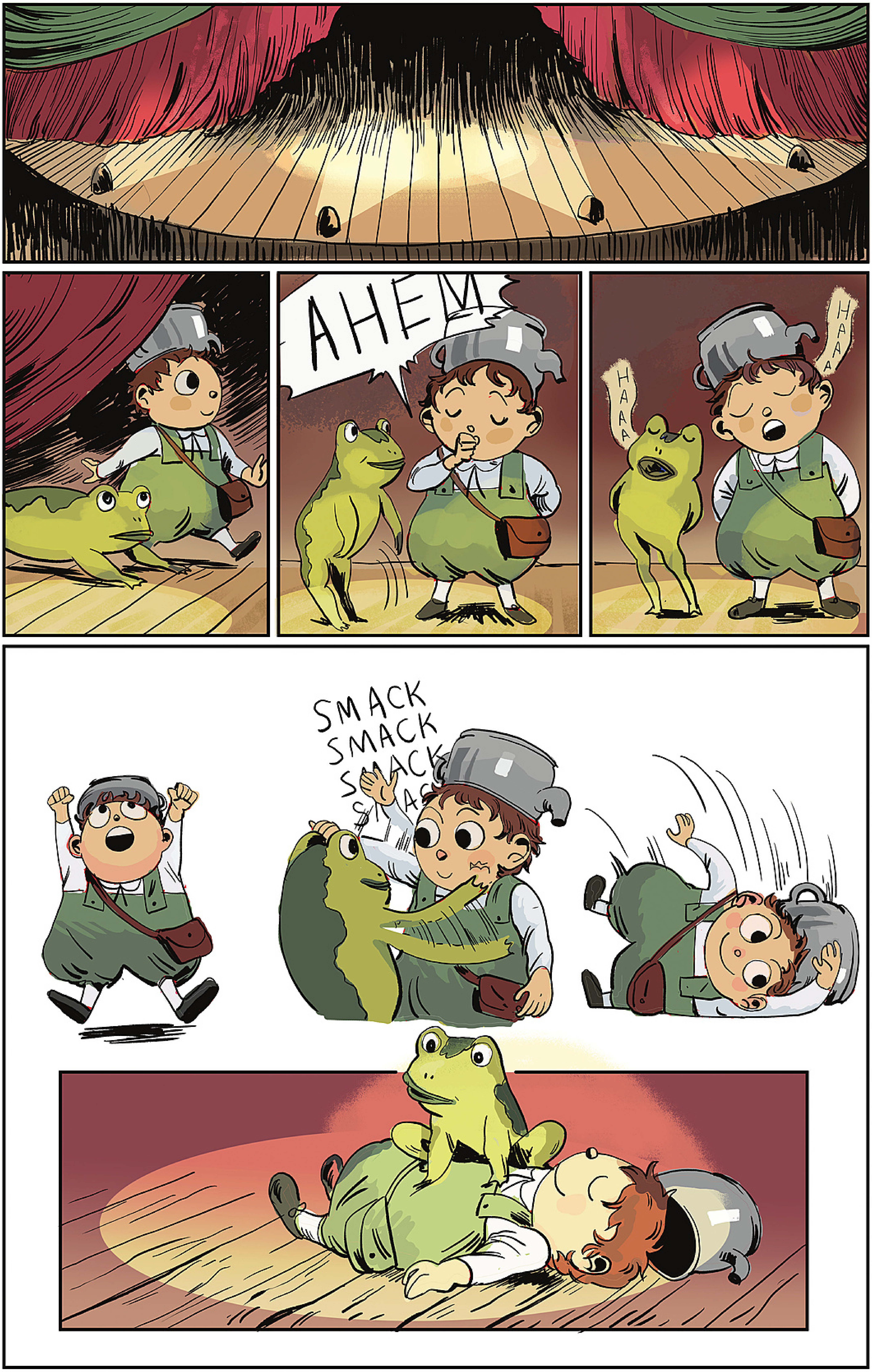

Verdi, we're gonna be professionals. Time to get fancy.
Wirt! I know you're just doing this to prove a point.
I am not.
Yes, you are.
Fine. Yes, I am.
FANTASMA
Great! You did it.
Now, let's leave.

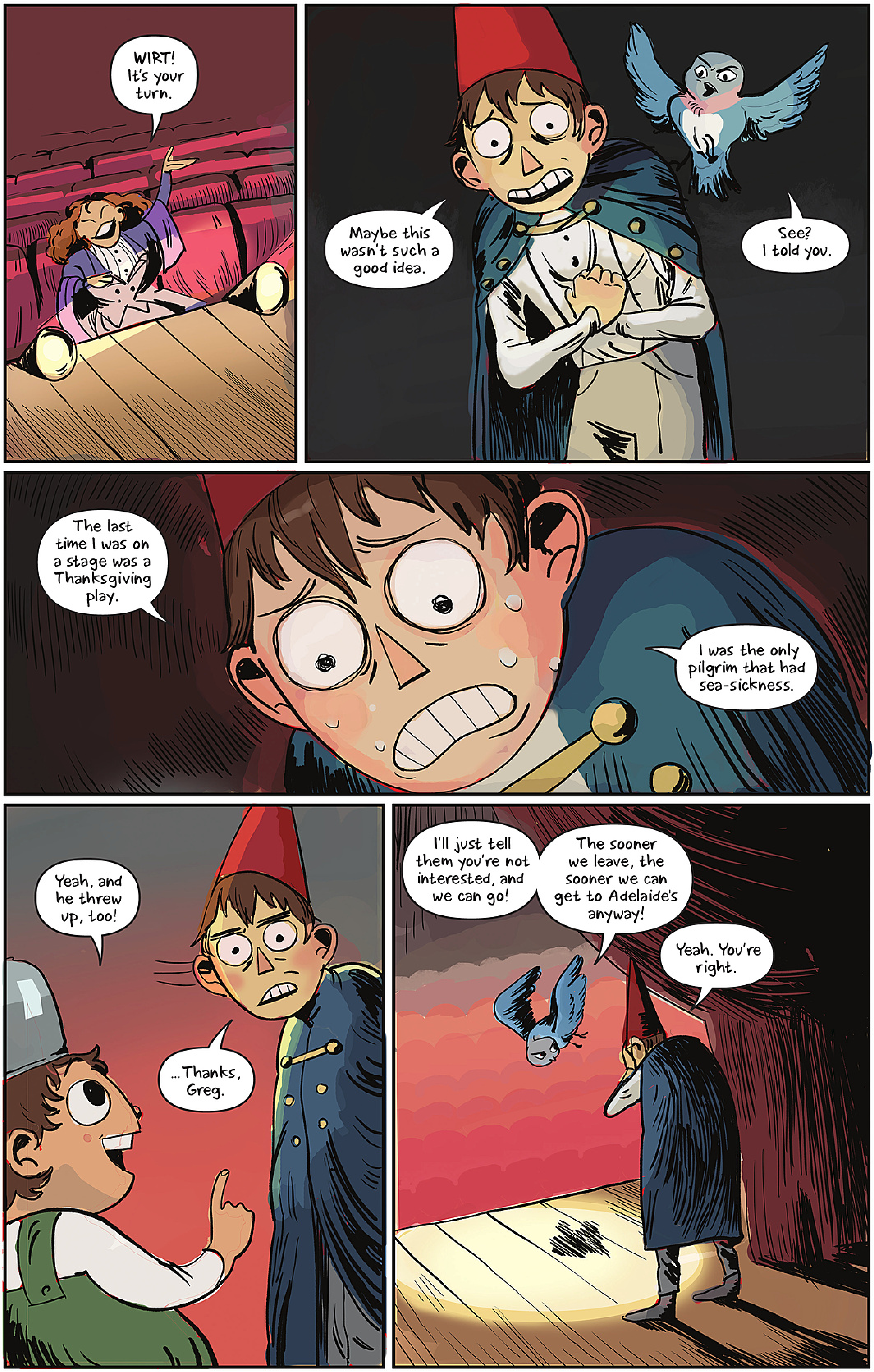

Sister!
Sisters! I've brought two new souls to our humble theater!
And they seem just wonderful!
Tell us, are you here to audition?
Uhm, yes. Hi.
I'm Wirt. This is Greg...uh...
And Beatrice.
And Verdi! He's our frog!
I'm Mezz!
And I'm Altimira!
HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA
Welcome to the THEATER!

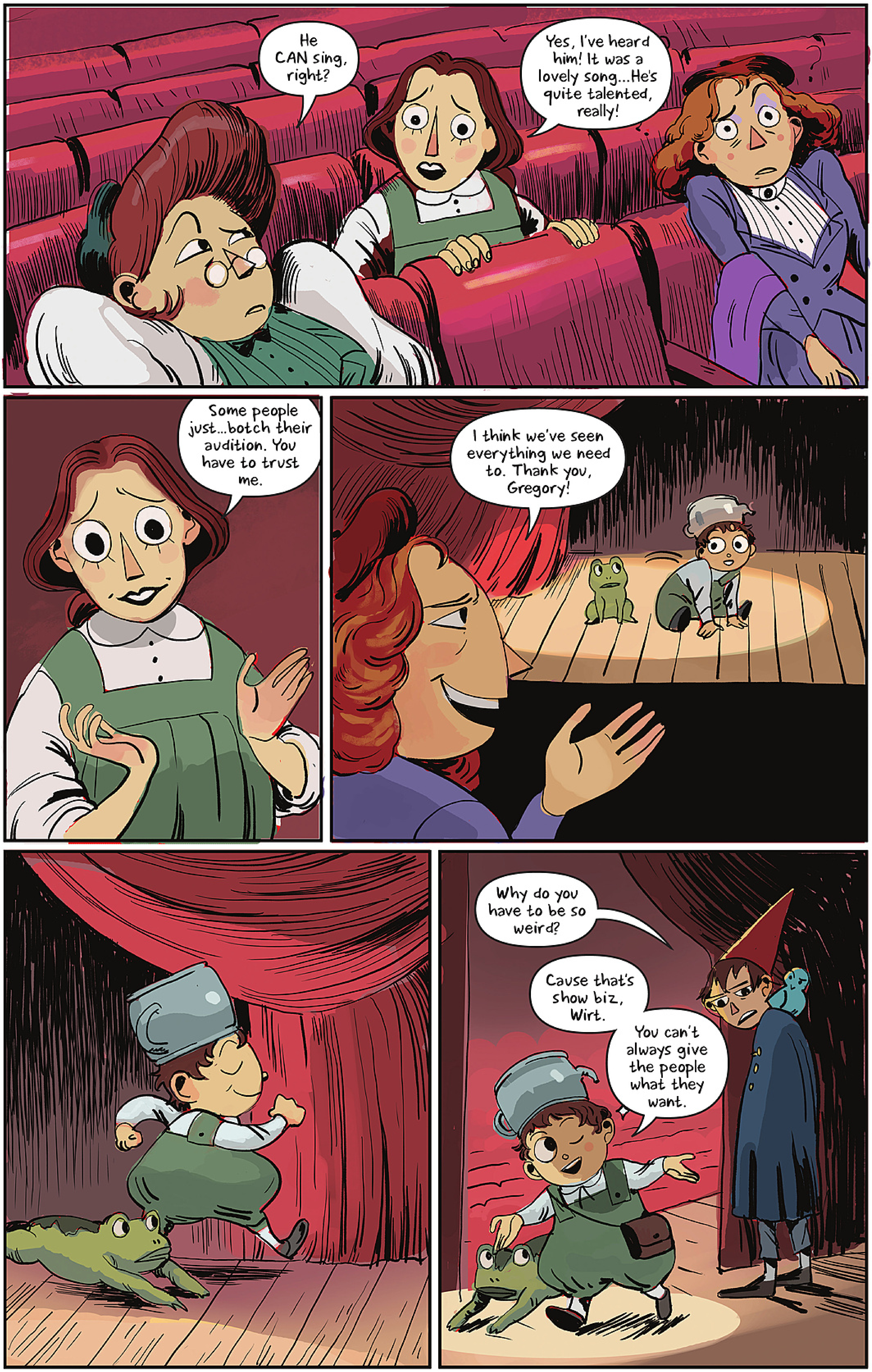

Let us give you all a tour--
Sophie, dear, don't bore them! There's only one thing worth seeing!
The STAGE.
Ah, the stage...
Where you craft a façade, And things often are odd--
That's the life that you live on the stage!
Where you give heart and soul, Though your work takes a toll, It's a sacrifice being on stage!
It's perfectly wonderful, perfectly tragic--the laughs that you're getting while being dramatic. There's something that frees all the doubts still inside-- When you're on the stage there is nothing to hide...
...If you join us up here, don't be worried my dears. You'll grow used to your life on the stage. Just sing us a song--not too short, not too long. Let's see if we're on the same page.
Show us...
...YOU BELONG ON THE STAGE!

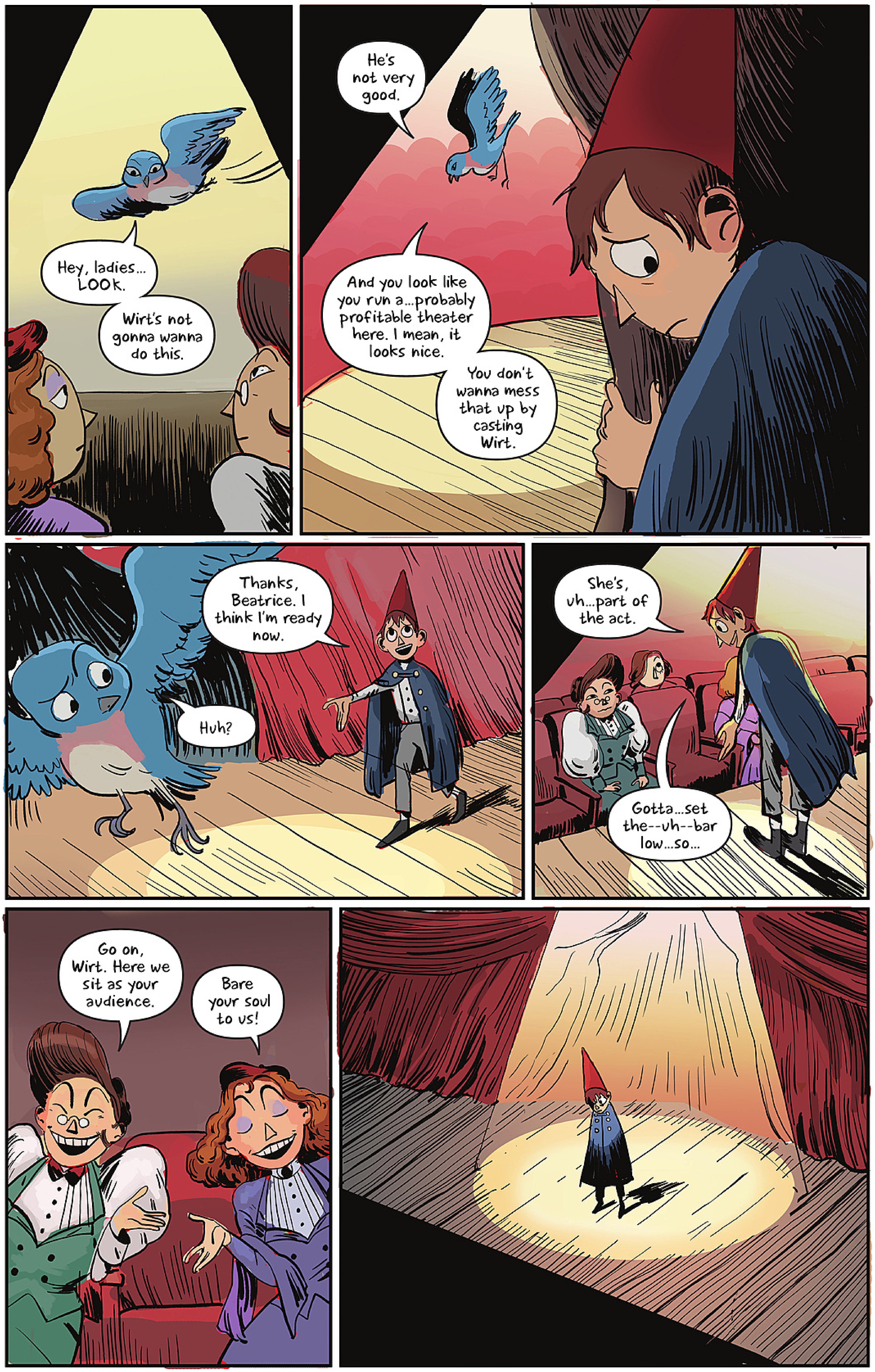

That was wonderful!
CLAP CLAP
Really, Sophie. It wasn't THAT good.
Oh... But I just thought...
It's all right, Sophie. It must be hard to have discerning taste when you're not allowed to sing.
You can't sing?
Well...

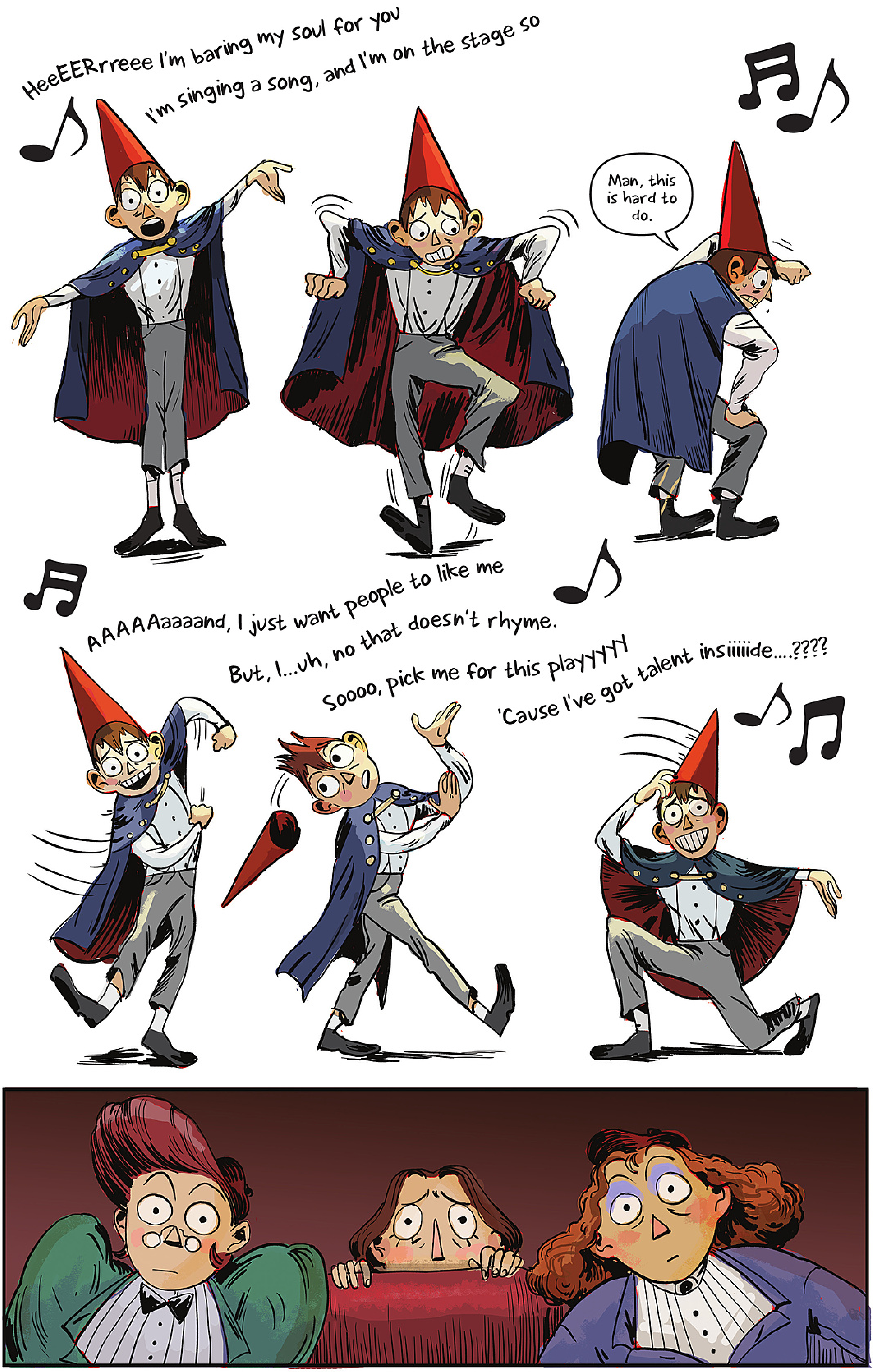

No, and that's why we're always one actor short!
This time it's worse! For this play, we need TWO!
Well, we're here to audition--
GOOD!
BEGIN.

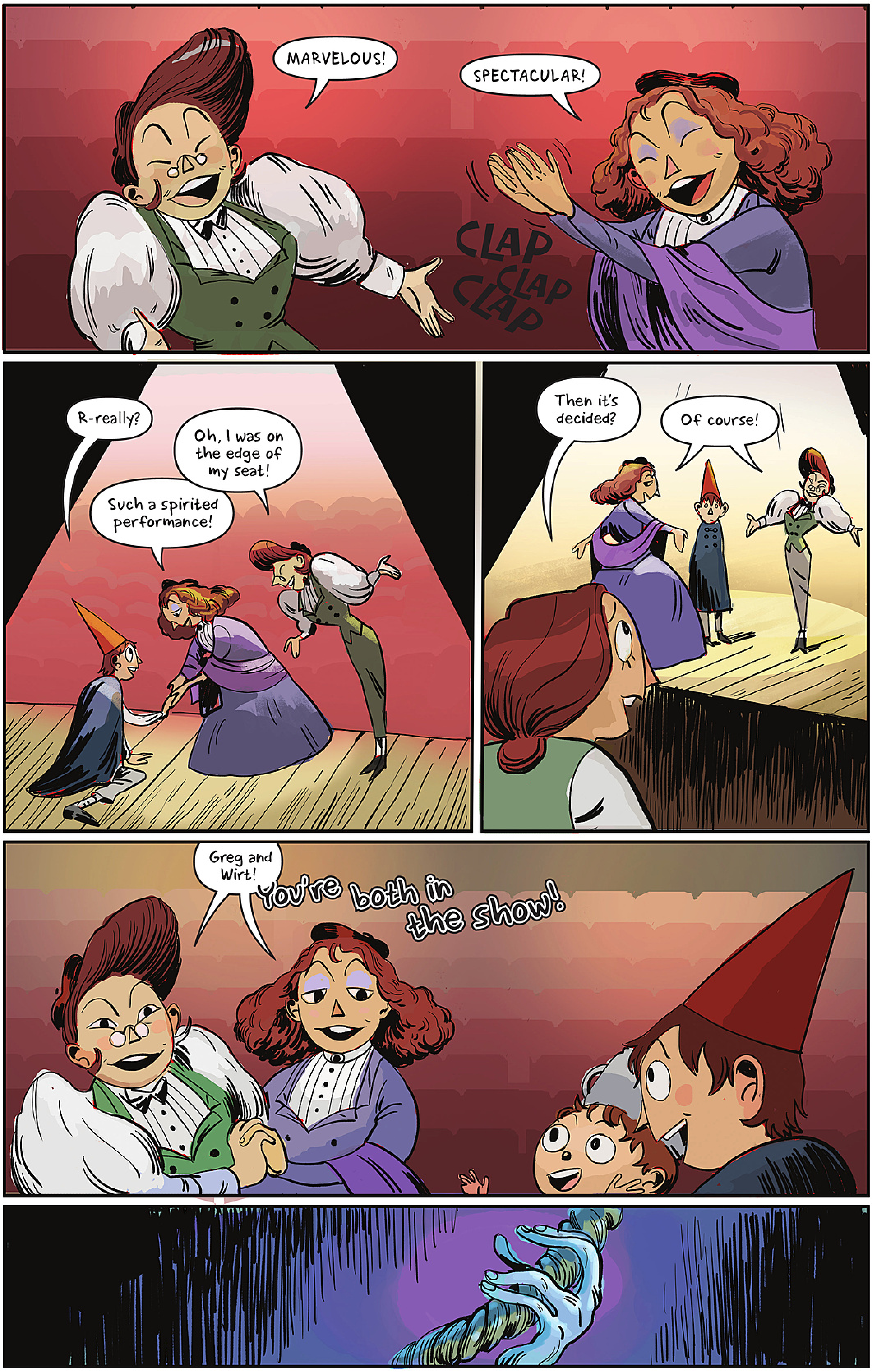

AHEM
HAAA
HAAA
SMACK
SMACK
SMACK
SMACK

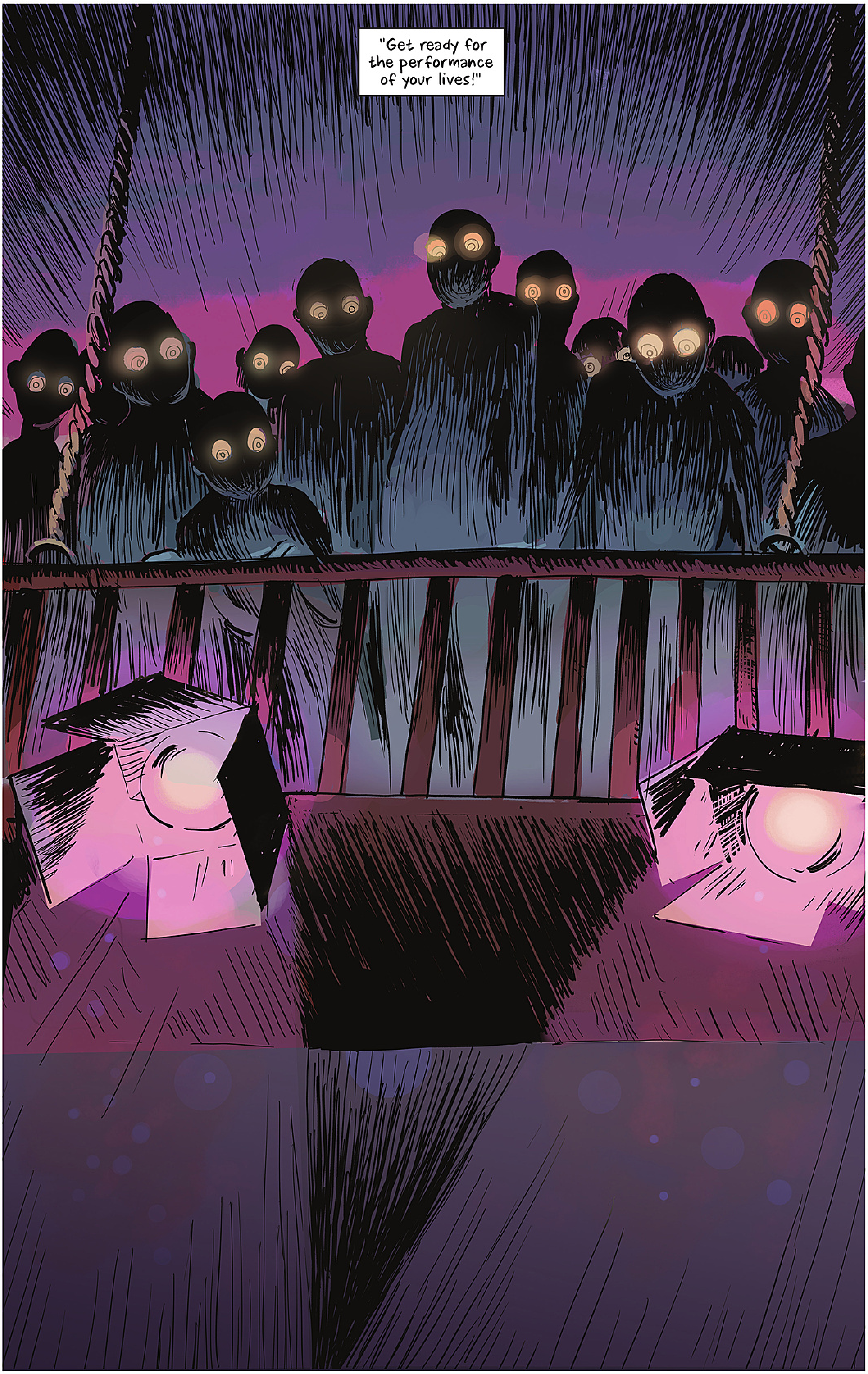

WIRT! It's your turn.
Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.
See? I told you.
The last time I was on a stage was a Thanksgiving play.
I was the only pilgrim that had sea-sickness.
Yeah, and he threw up, too!
...Thanks, Greg.
I'll just tell them you're not interested, and we can go!
The sooner we leave, the sooner we can get to Adelaide's anyway!
Yeah. You're right.


He CAN sing, right?
Yes, I've heard him! It was a lovely song...He's quite talented, really!
Some people just...botch their audition. You have to trust me.
I think we've seen everything we need to. Thank you, Gregory!
Why do you have to be so weird?
Cause that's show biz, Wirt.
You can't always give the people what they want.


Hey, ladies... LOOK.
Wirt's not gonna wanna do this.
He's not very good.
And you look like you run a...probably profitable theater here. I mean, it looks nice.
You don't wanna mess that up by casting Wirt.
Thanks, Beatrice. I think I'm ready now.
Huh?
She's, uh...part of the act.
Gotta...set the--uh--bar low...so...
Go on, Wirt. Here we sit as your audience.
Bare your soul to us!

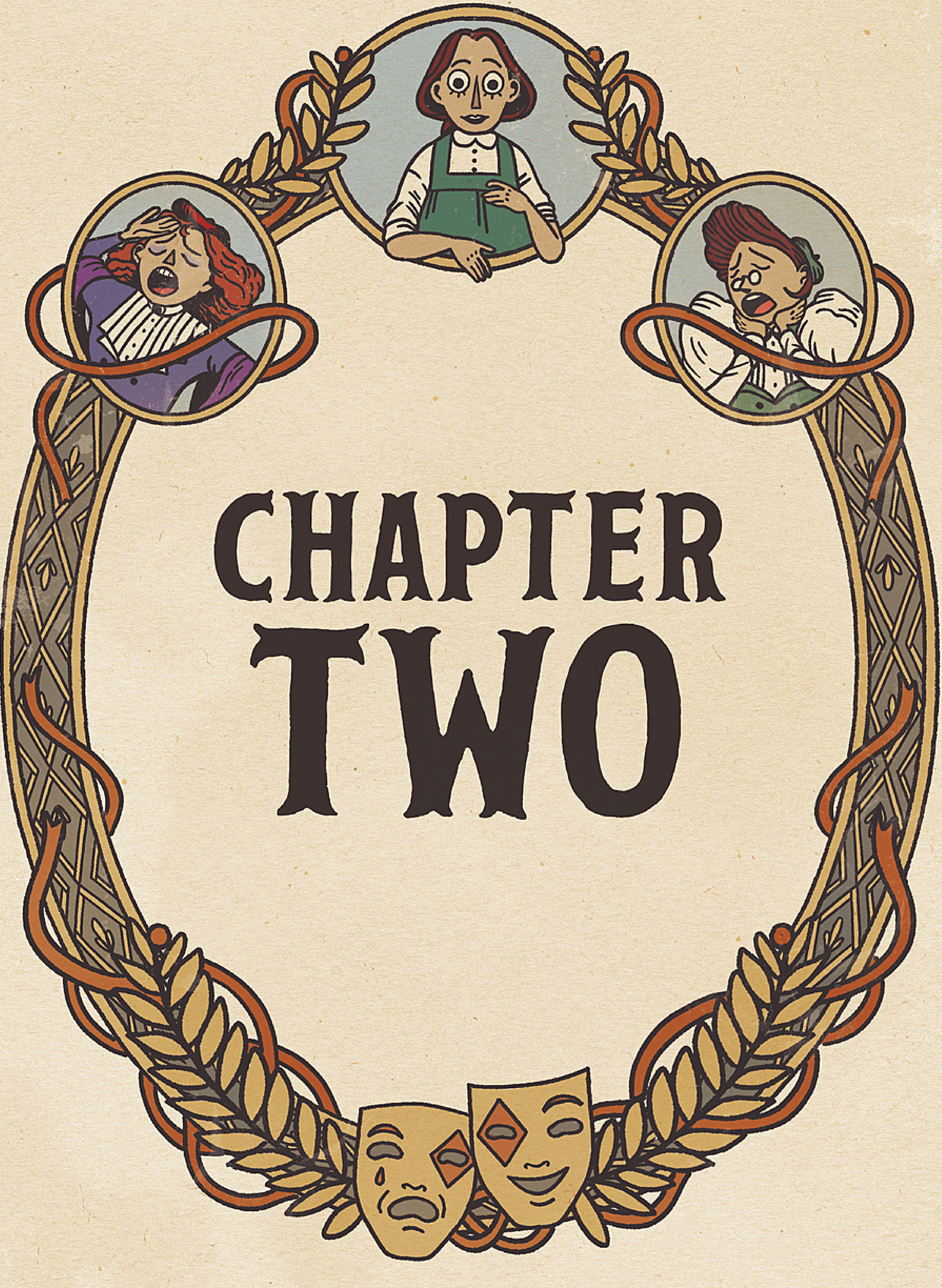

HeeEERrreee I'm baring my soul for you
I'm singing a song, and I'm on the stage so
Man, this is hard to do.
AAAAAaaaand, I just want people to like me
But, I...uh, no that doesn't rhyme.
Soooo, pick me for this playyyyy
'Cause I've got talent insiiiiide....????

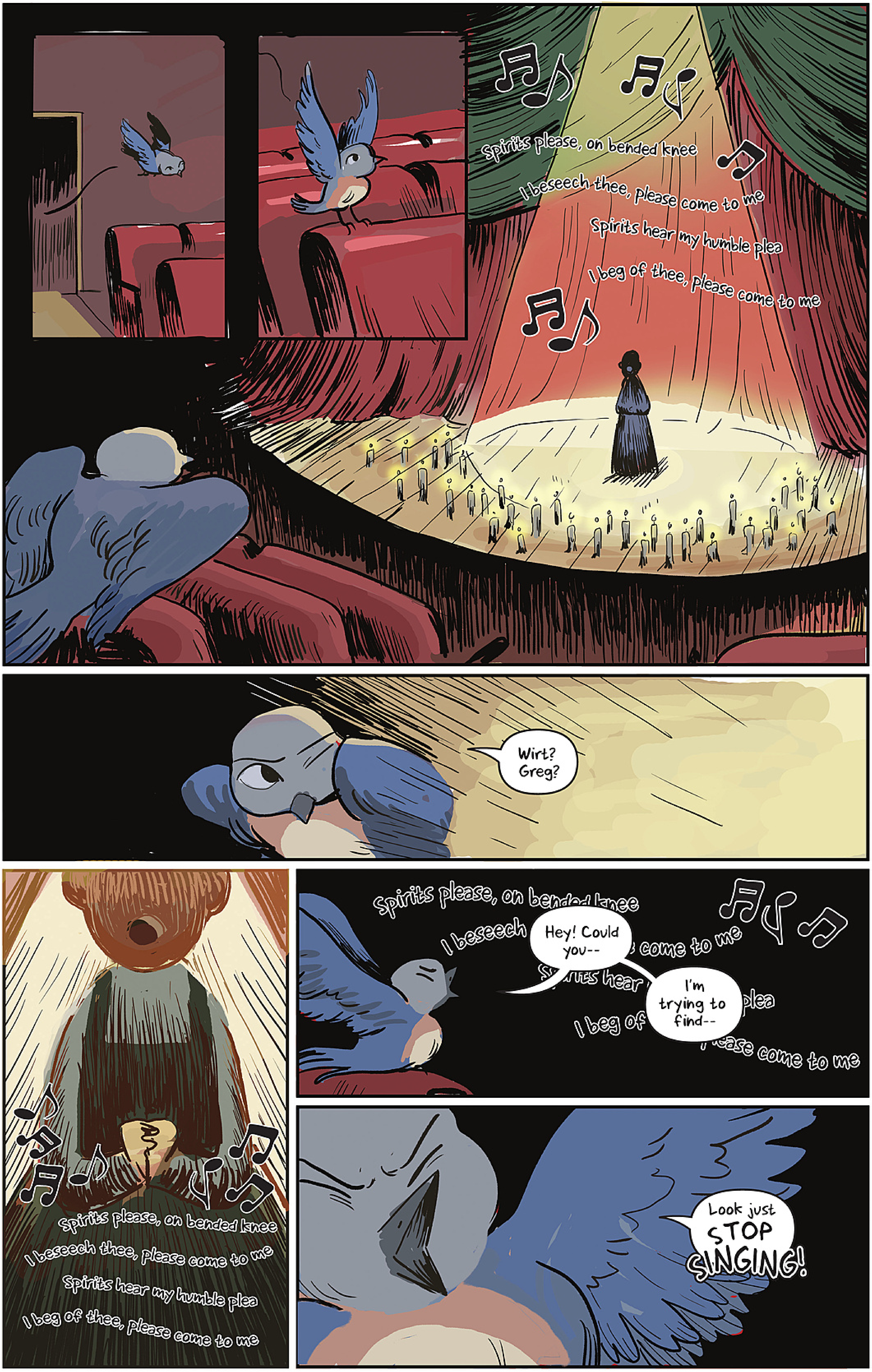

MARVELOUS!
SPECTACULAR!
CLAP CLAP CLAP
R-really?
Oh, I was on the edge of my seat!
Such a spirited performance!
Then it's decided?
Of course!
Greg and Wirt!
You're both in the show!

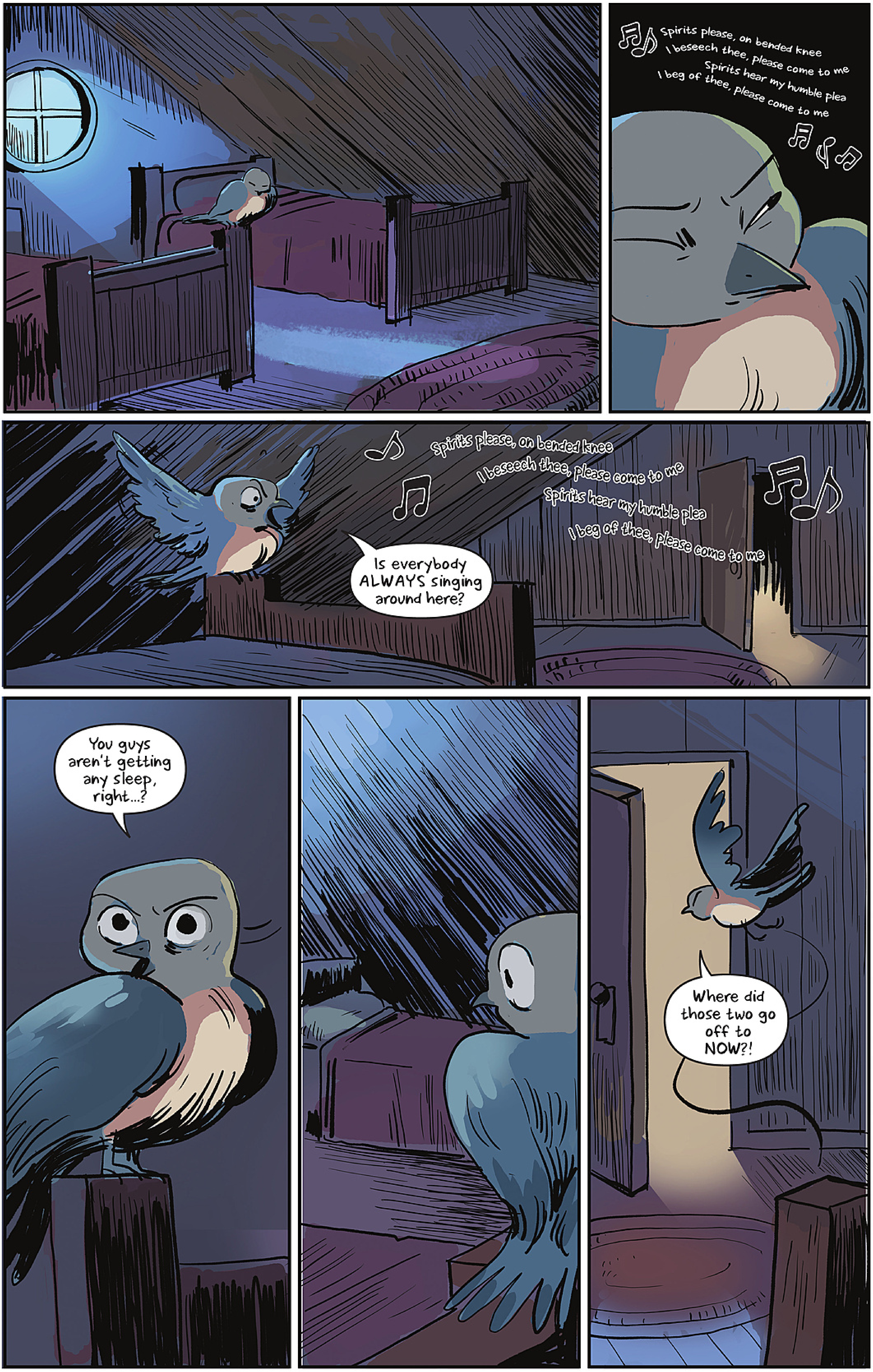

"Get ready for the performance of your lives!"

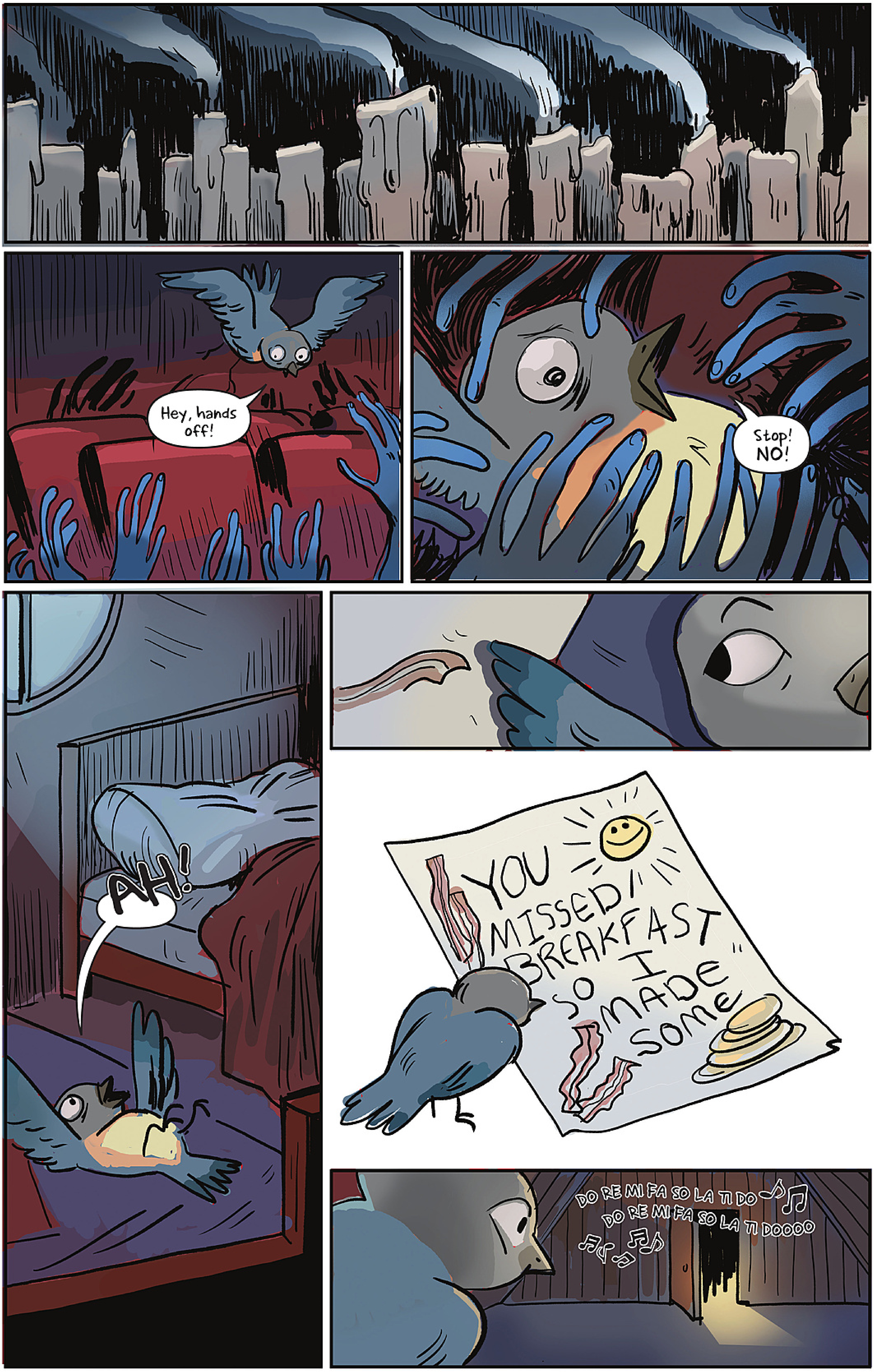
HAAA
HAAA

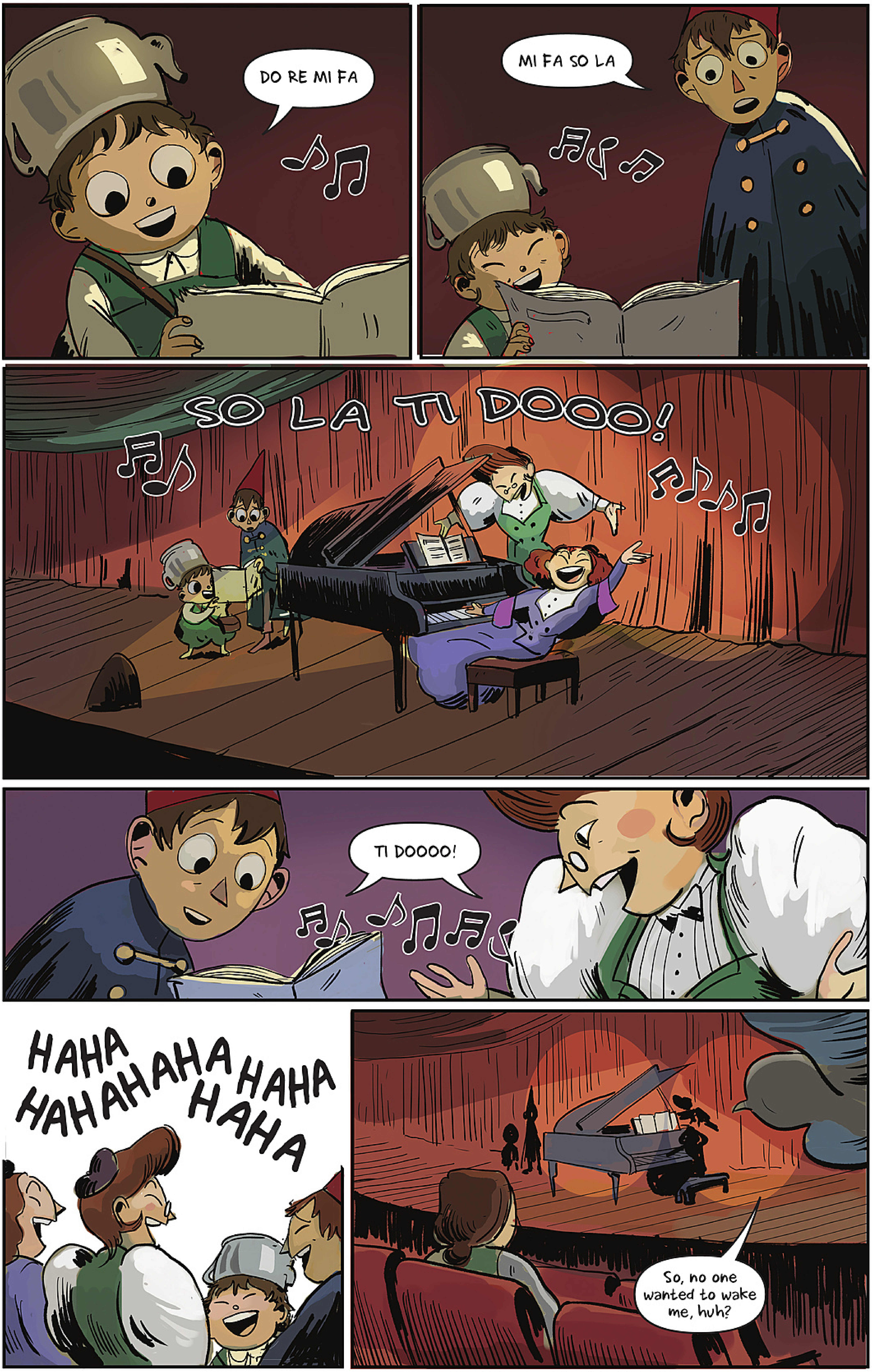
CHAPTER TWO

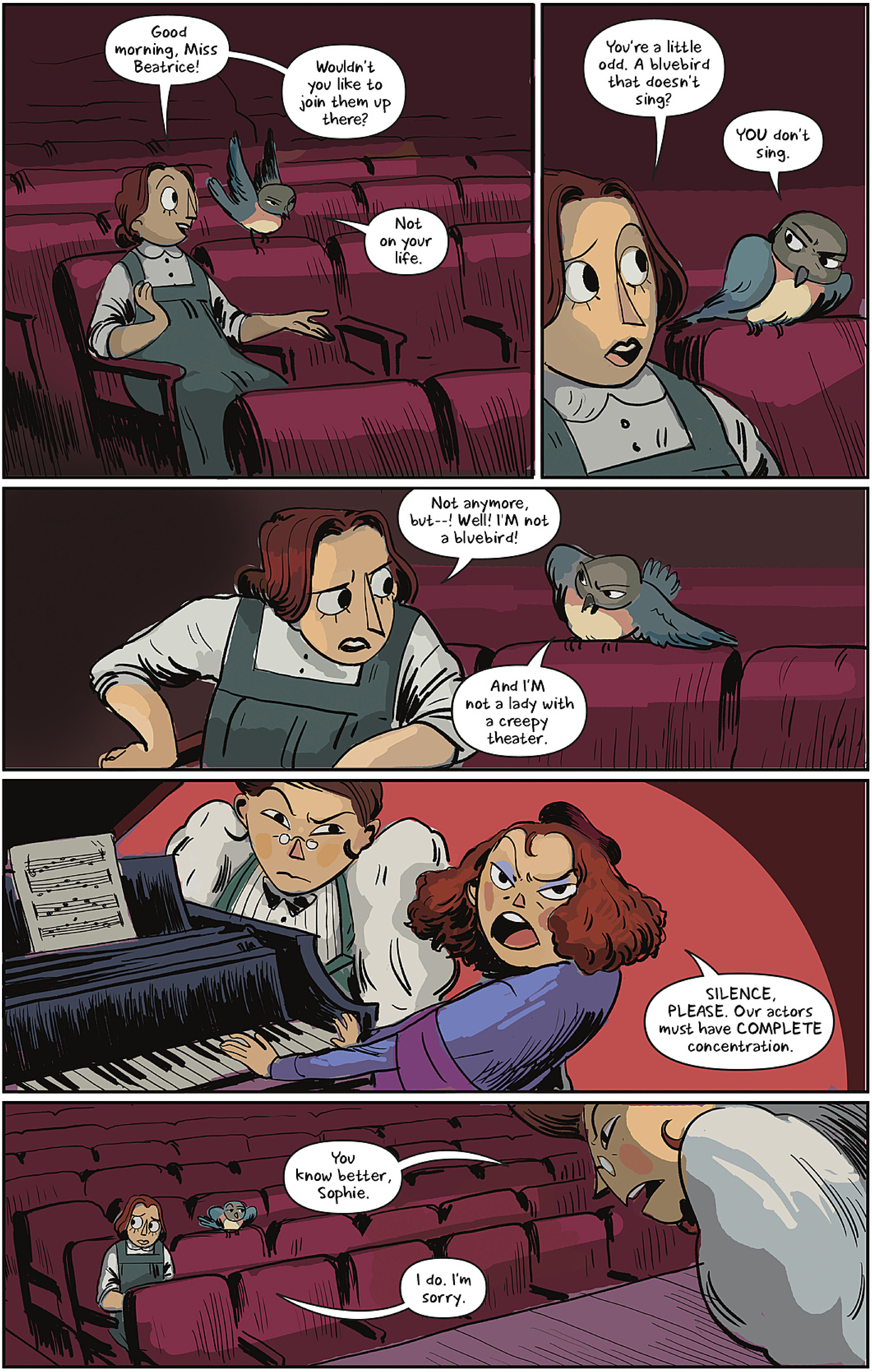


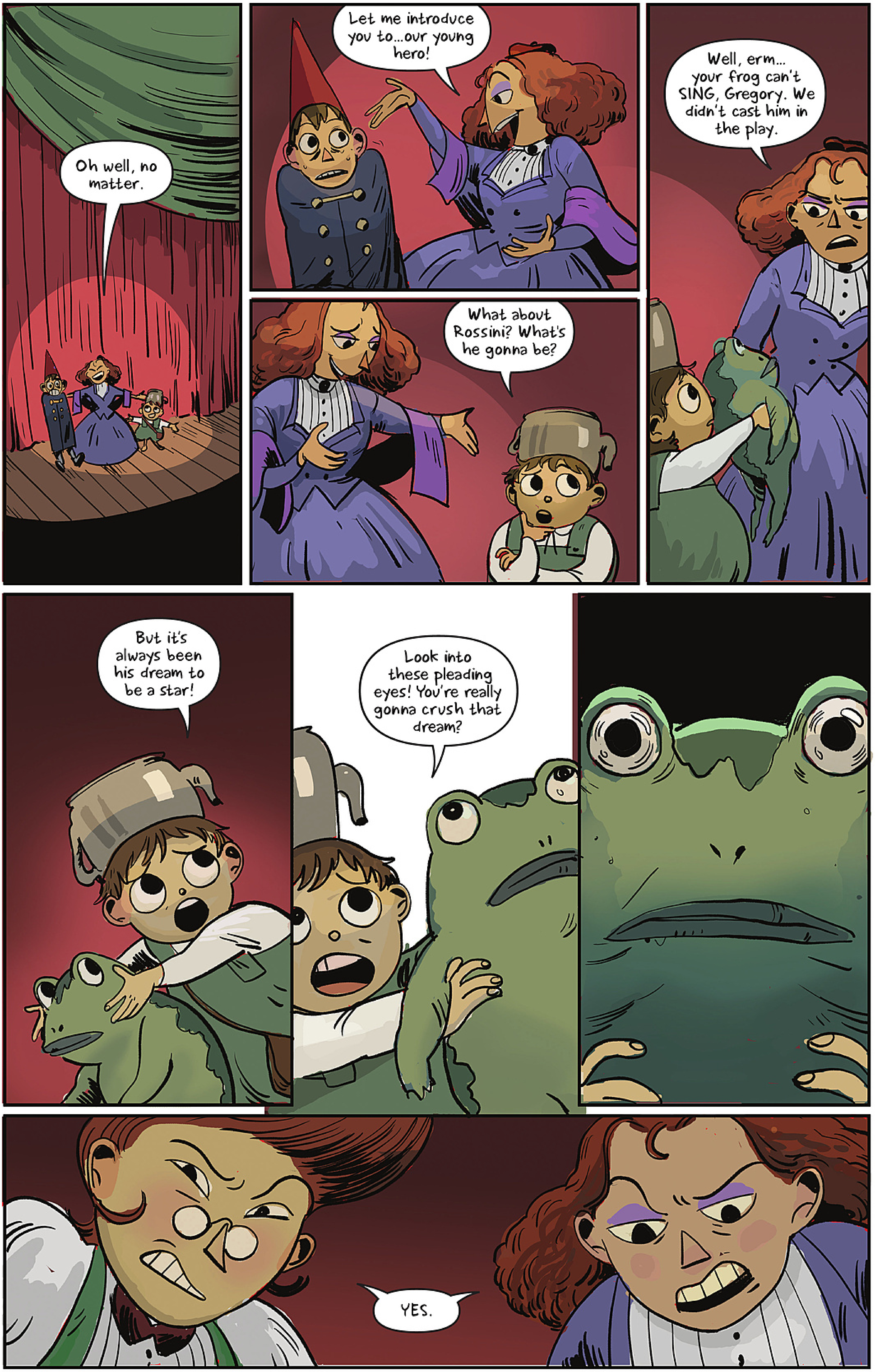

Spirits please, on bended knee
I beseech thee, please come to me
Spirits hear my humble plea
I beg of thee, please come to me
Wirt? Greg?
Spirits please, on bended knee
I beseech thee, please come to me
Spirits hear my humble plea
I beg of thee, please come to me
Spirits please, on bended knee
I beseech
come to me
Hey! Could you--
its hear
I'm trying to find--
plea
I beg of
lease come to me
Look just STOP SINGING!

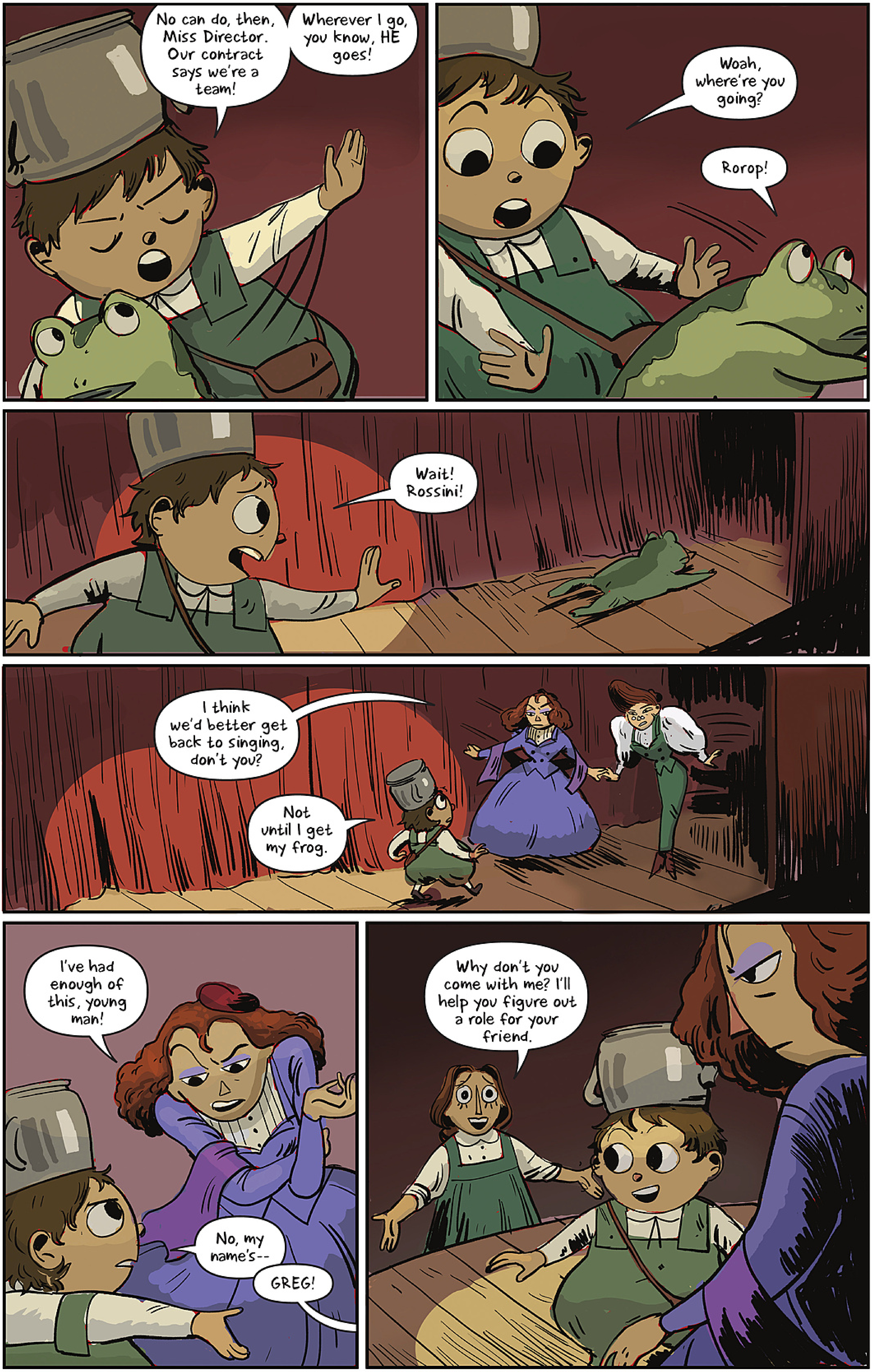

Spirits please, on bended knee
I beseech thee, please come to me
Spirits hear my humble plea
I beg of thee, please come to me
Spirits please, on bended knee
I beseech thee, please come to me
Spirits hear my humble plea
I beg of thee, please come to me
Is everybody ALWAYS singing around here?
You guys aren't getting any sleep, right...?
Where did those two go off to NOW?!

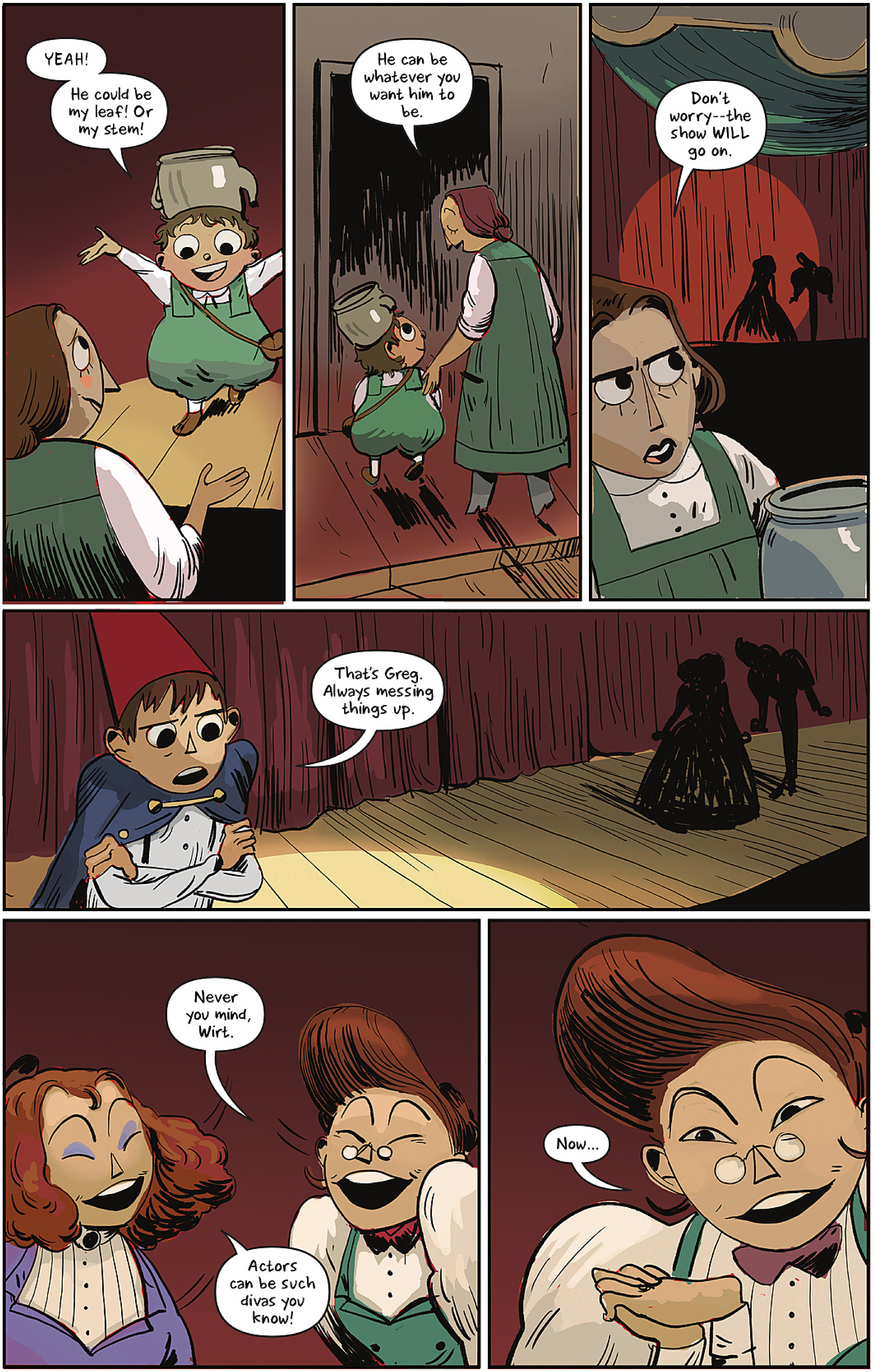

Hey, hands off!
Stop! NO!
AH!
YOU MISSED BREAKFAST SO I MADE SOME
DO RE MI FA SO LA TI DO ♪♫
DO RE MI FA SO LA TI DOOOO ♪♫

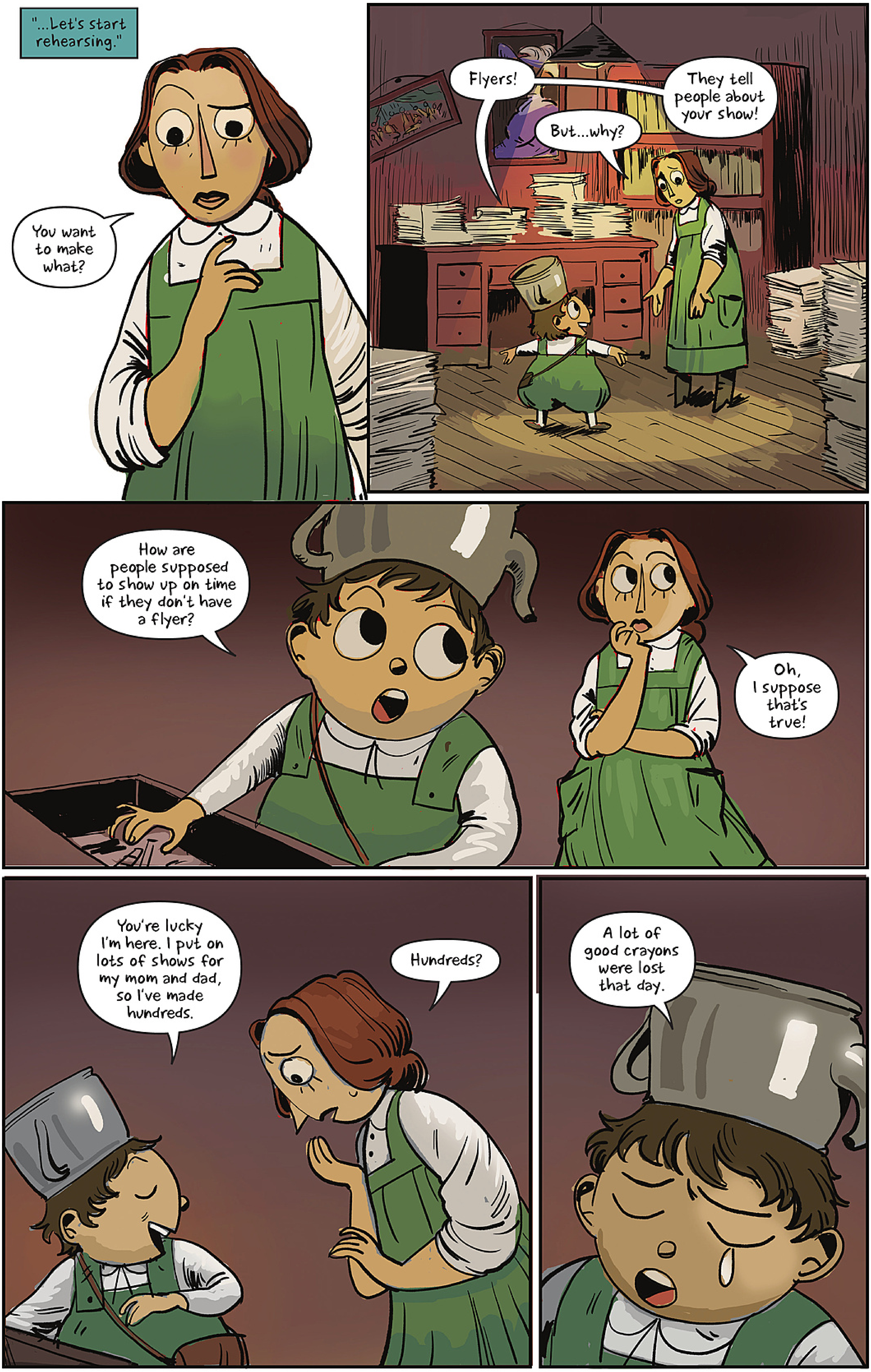

DO RE MI FA
MI FA SO LA
SO LA TI DOOOO!
TI DOOOO!
HAHA HAHAHAHA HAHA HAHA
So, no one wanted to wake me, huh?

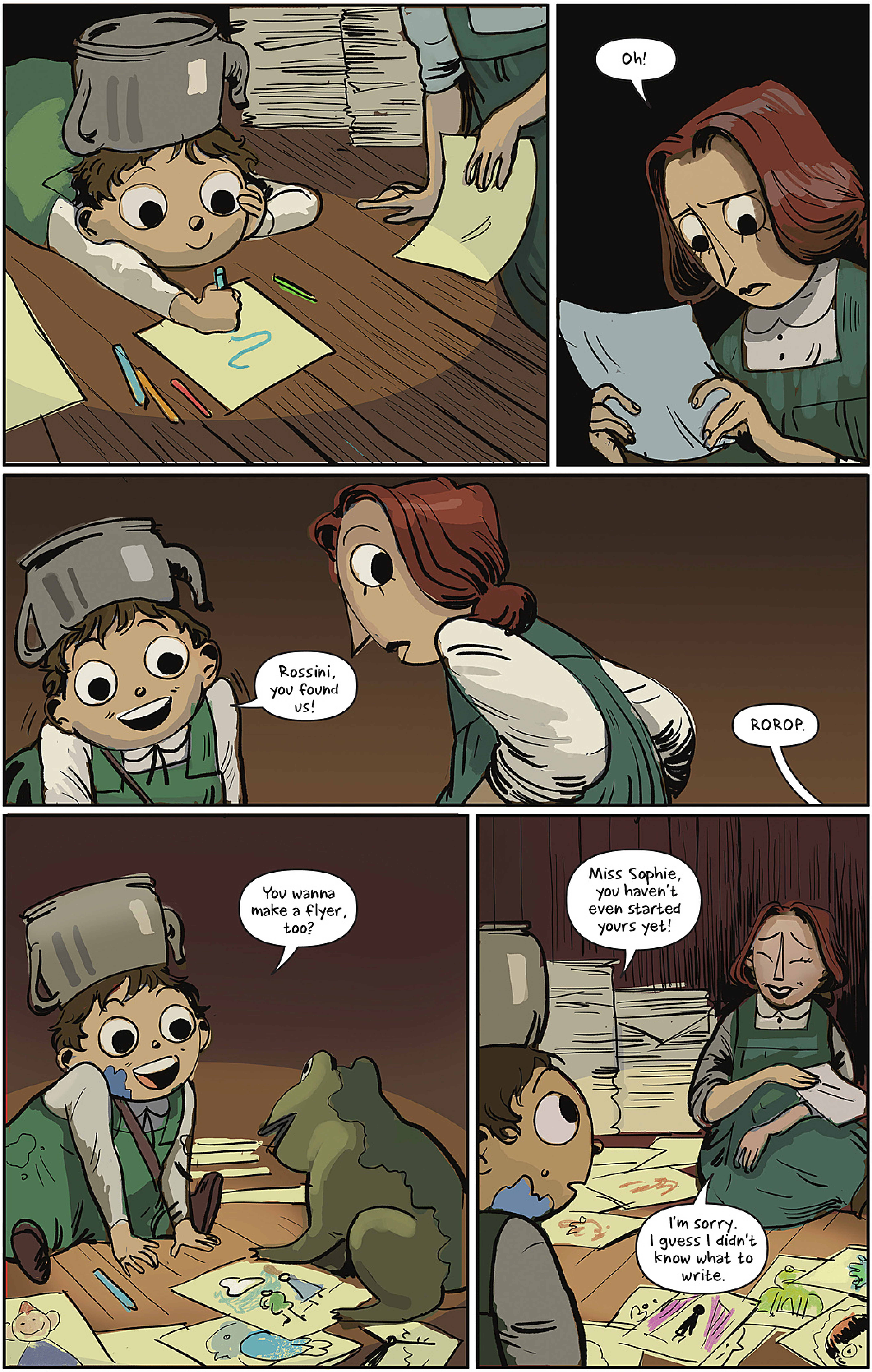

Good morning, Miss Beatrice!
Wouldn't you like to join them up there?
Not on your life.
You're a little odd. A bluebird that doesn't sing?
YOU don't sing.
Not anymore, but--! Well! I'M not a bluebird!
And I'M not a lady with a creepy theater.
SILENCE, PLEASE. Our actors must have COMPLETE concentration.
You know better, Sophie.
I do. I'm sorry.

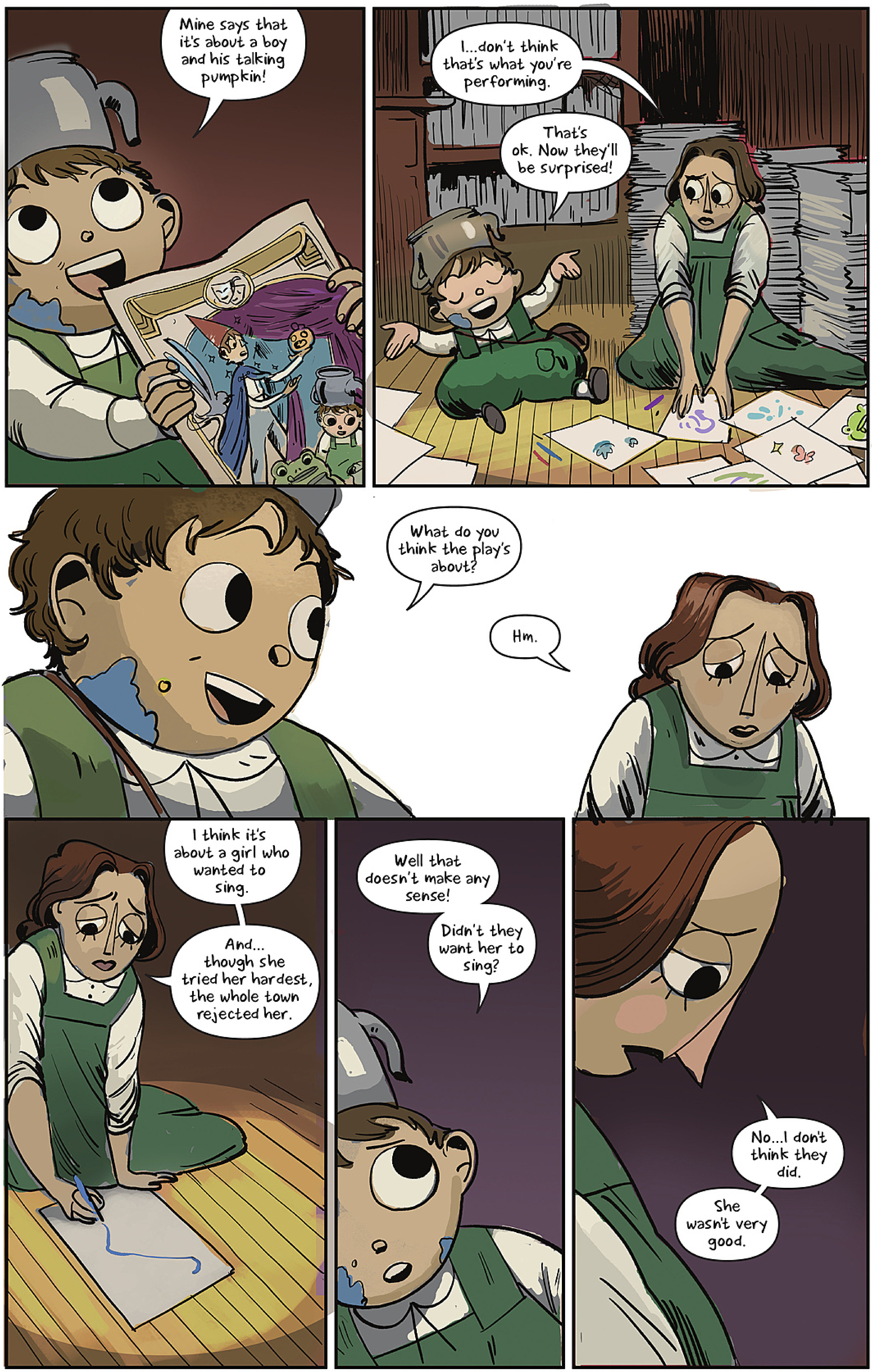

Oh well, no matter.
Let me introduce you to...our young hero!
What about Rossini? What's he gonna be?
Well, erm... your frog can't SING, Gregory. We didn't cast him in the play.
But it's always been his dream to be a star!
Look into these pleading eyes! You're really gonna crush that dream?
YES.

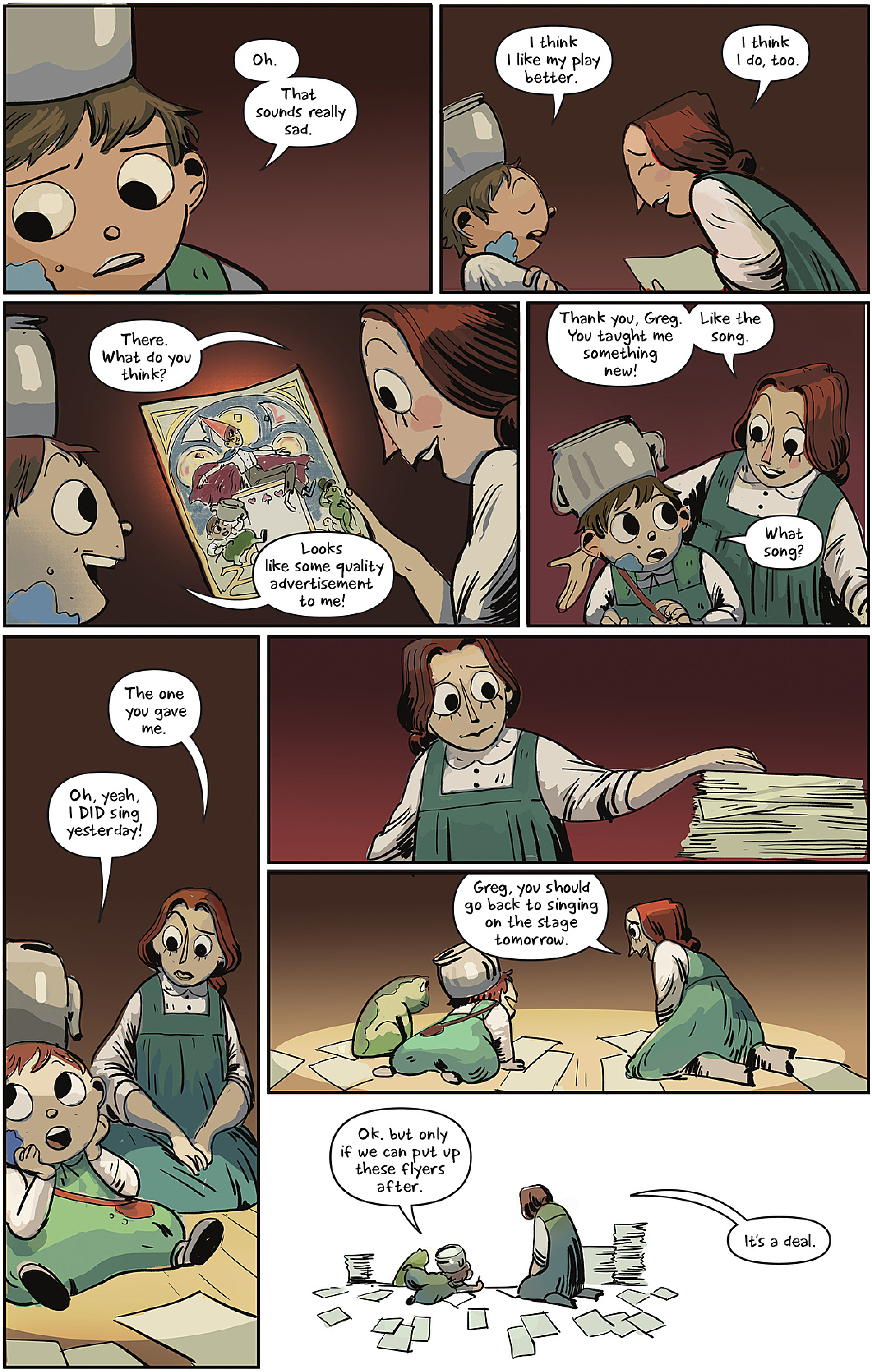

No can do, then, Miss Director. Our contract says we're a team!
Wherever I go, you know, HE goes!
Woah, where're you going?
Rorop!
Wait! Rossini!
I think we'd better get back to singing, don't you?
Not until I get my frog.
I've had enough of this, young man!
No, my name's--
GREG!
Why don't you come with me? I'll help you figure out a role for your friend.

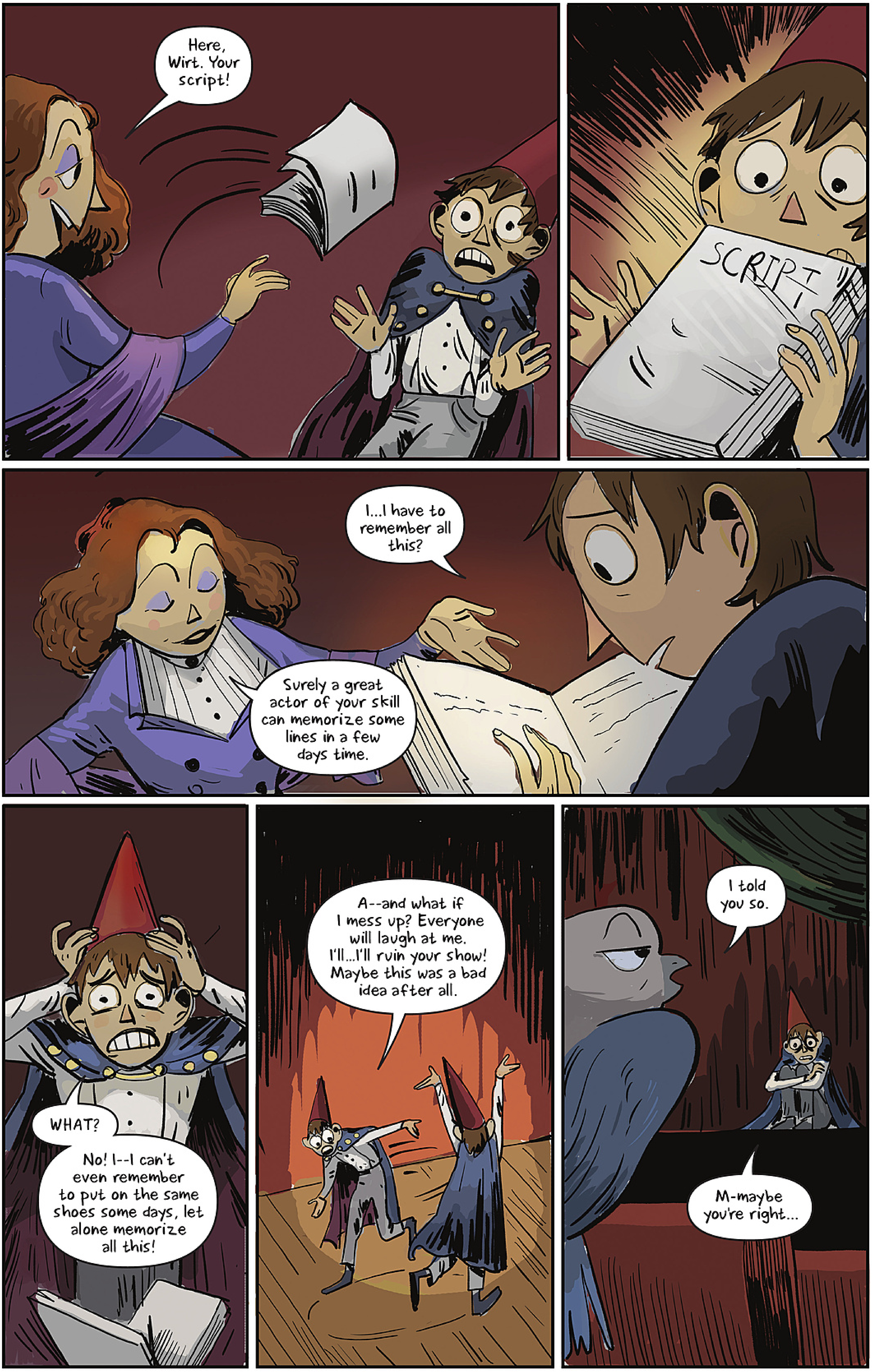

YEAH!
He could be my leaf! Or my stem!
He can be whatever you want him to be.
Don't worry--the show WILL go on.
That's Greg. Always messing things up.
Never you mind, Wirt.
Actors can be such divas you know!
Now...

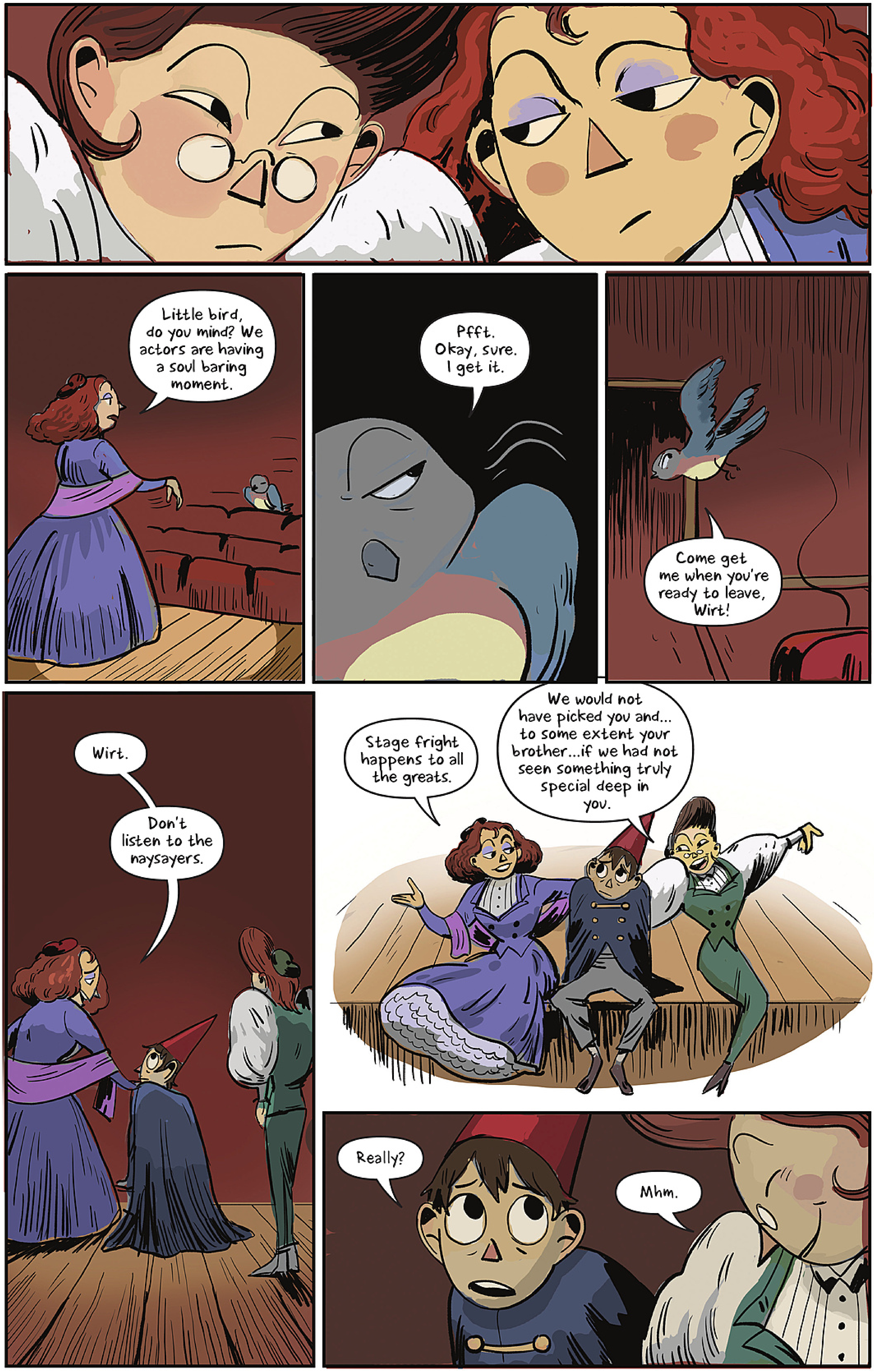

"...Let's start rehearsing."
You want to make what?
Flyers!
They tell people about your show!
But...why?
How are people supposed to show up on time if they don't have a flyer?
Oh, I suppose that's true!
You're lucky I'm here. I put on lots of shows for my mom and dad, so I've made hundreds.
Hundreds?
A lot of good crayons were lost that day.

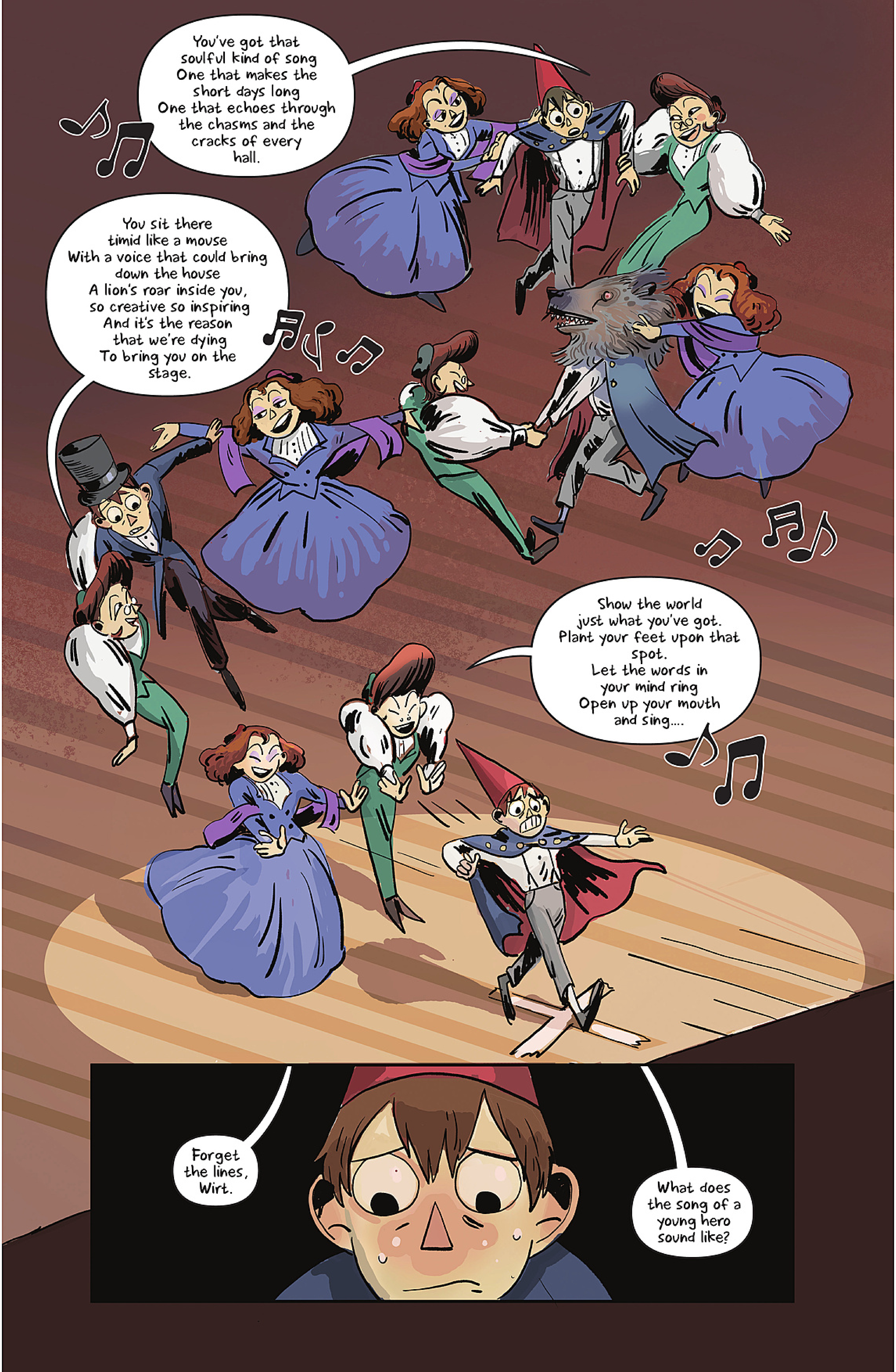

Oh!
Rossini, you found us!
ROROP.
You wanna make a flyer, too?
Miss Sophie, you haven't even started yours yet!
I'm sorry. I guess I didn't know what to write.

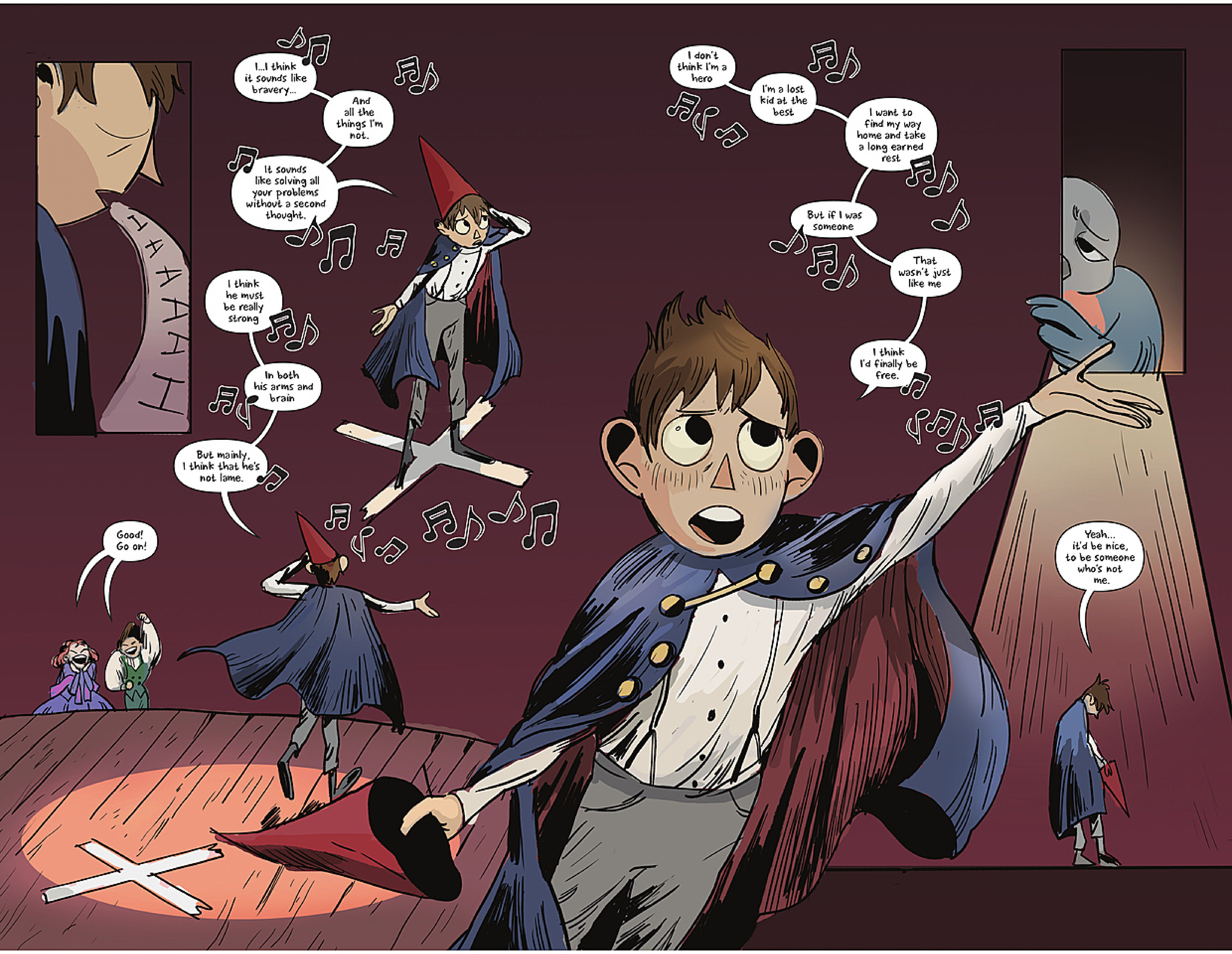

Mine says that it's about a boy and his talking pumpkin!
I...don't think that's what you're performing.
That's ok. Now they'll be surprised!
What do you think the play's about?
Hm.
I think it's about a girl who wanted to sing.
And... though she tried her hardest, the whole town rejected her.
Well that doesn't make any sense!
Didn't they want her to sing?
No...I don't think they did.
She wasn't very good.

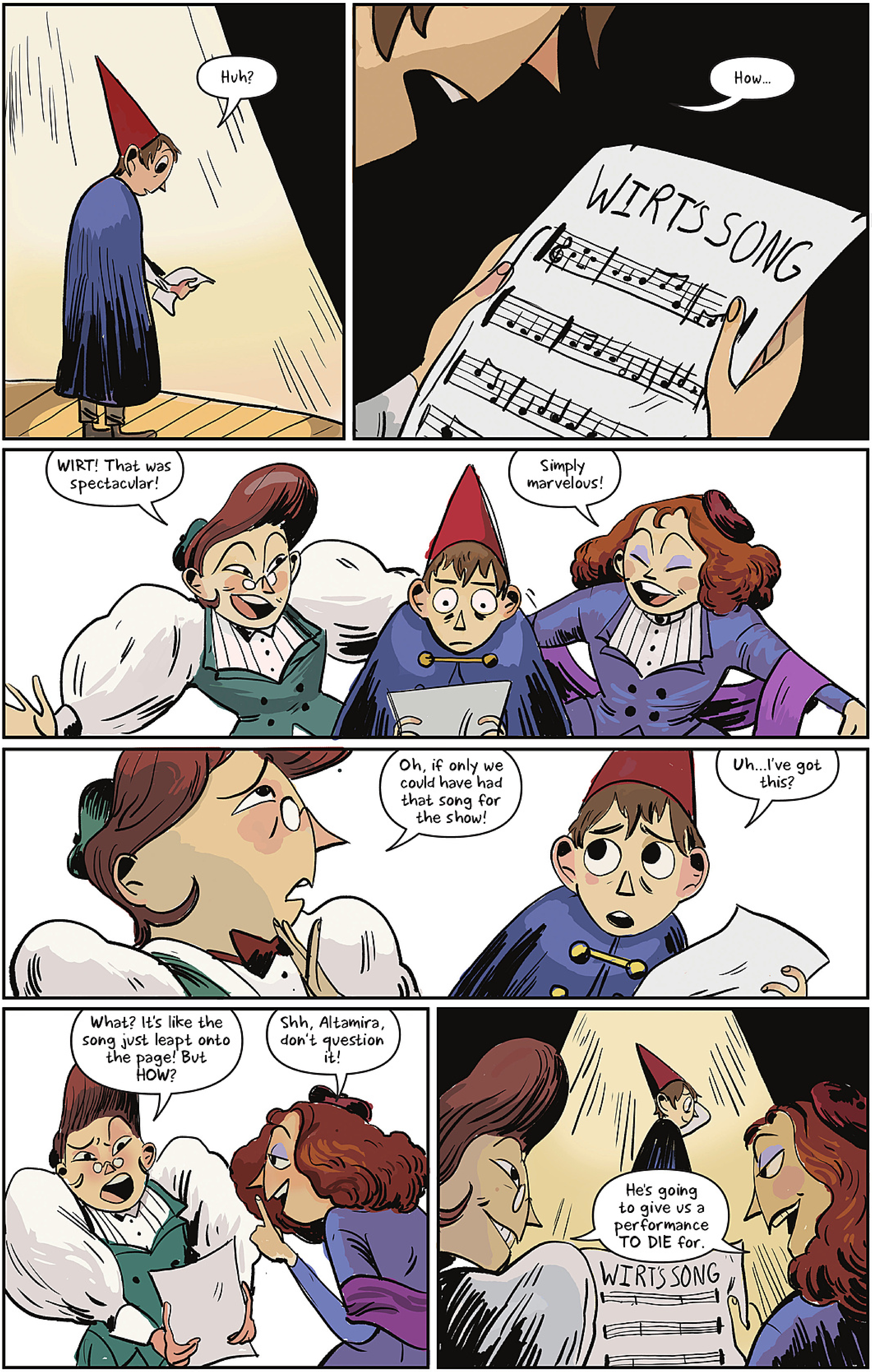

Oh.
That sounds really sad.
I think I like my play better.
I think I do, too.
There. What do you think?
Looks like some quality advertisement to me!
Thank you, Greg. You taught me something new!
Like the song.
What song?
The one you gave me.
Oh, yeah, I DID sing yesterday!
Greg, you should go back to singing on the stage tomorrow.
Ok. but only if we can put up these flyers after.
It's a deal.

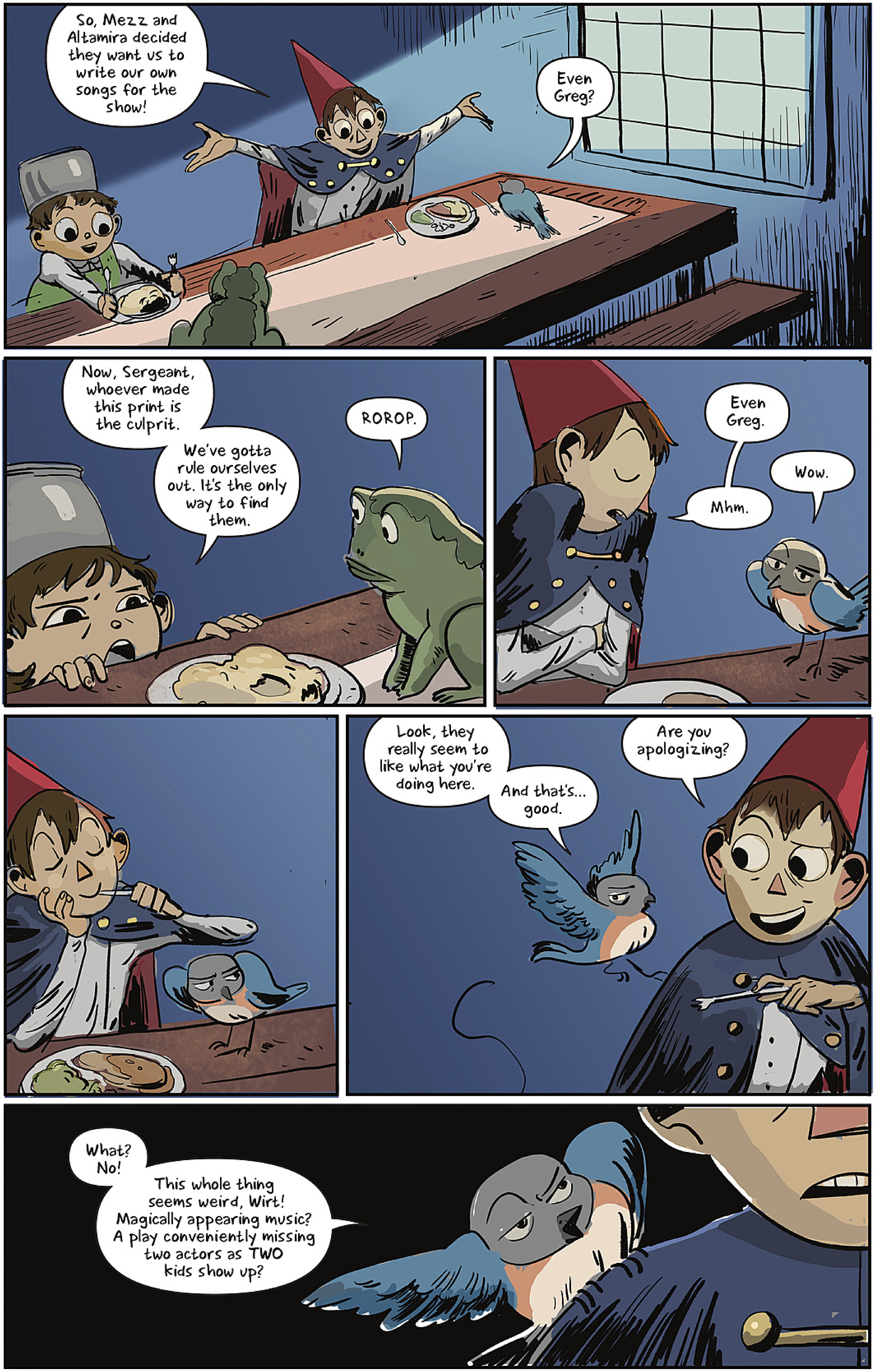

Here, Wirt. Your script!
SCRIPT
I...I have to remember all this?
Surely a great actor of your skill can memorize some lines in a few days time.
WHAT?
No! I--I can't even remember to put on the same shoes some days, let alone memorize all this!
A--and what if I mess up? Everyone will laugh at me. I'll...I'll ruin your show! Maybe this was a bad idea after all.
I told you so.
M-maybe you're right...

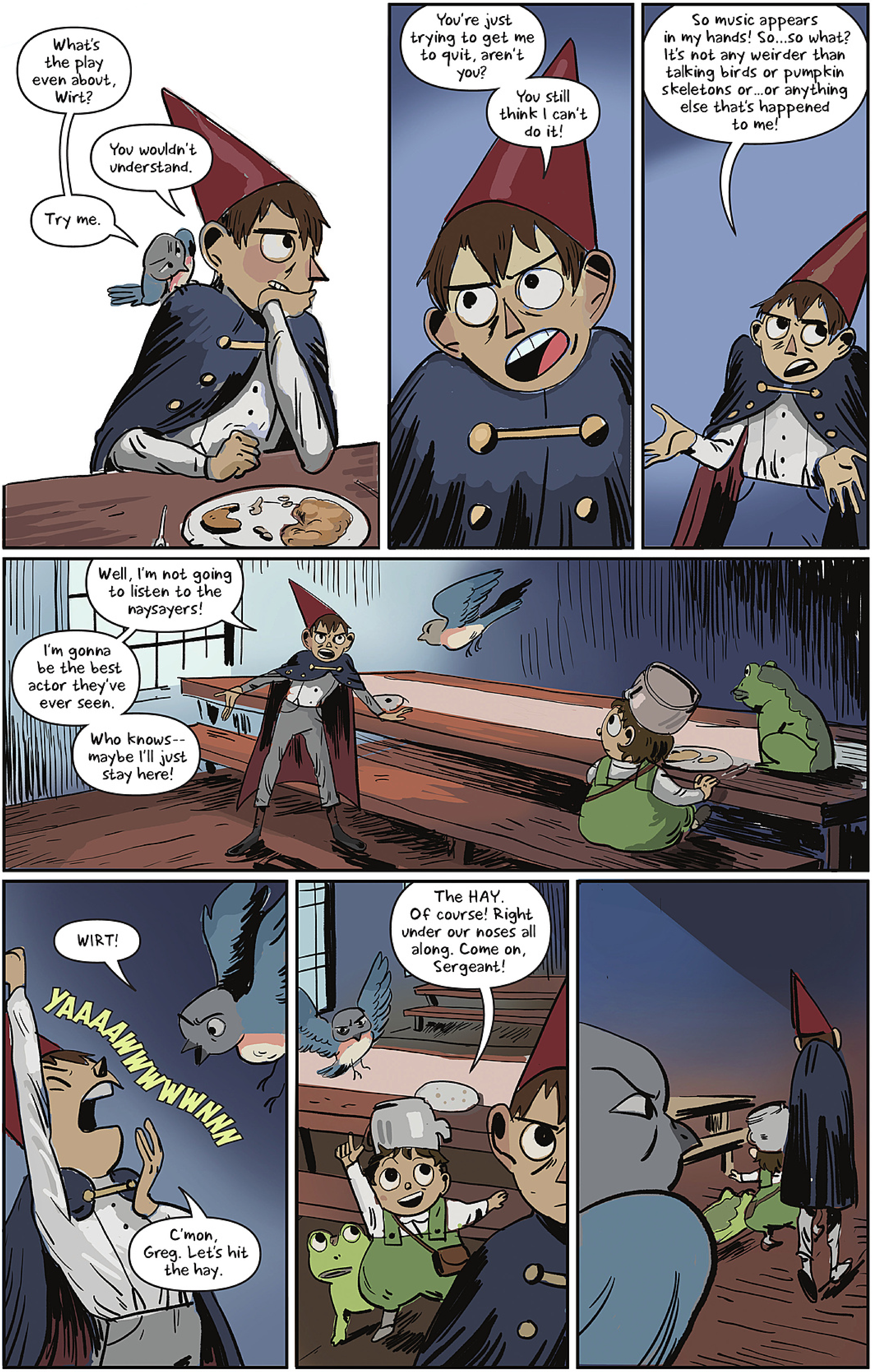

Little bird, do you mind? We actors are having a soul baring moment.
Pfft. Okay, sure. I get it.
Come get me when you're ready to leave, Wirt!
Wirt.
Don't listen to the naysayers.
Stage fright happens to all the greats.
We would not have picked you and... to some extent your brother...if we had not seen something truly special deep in you.
Really?
Mhm.

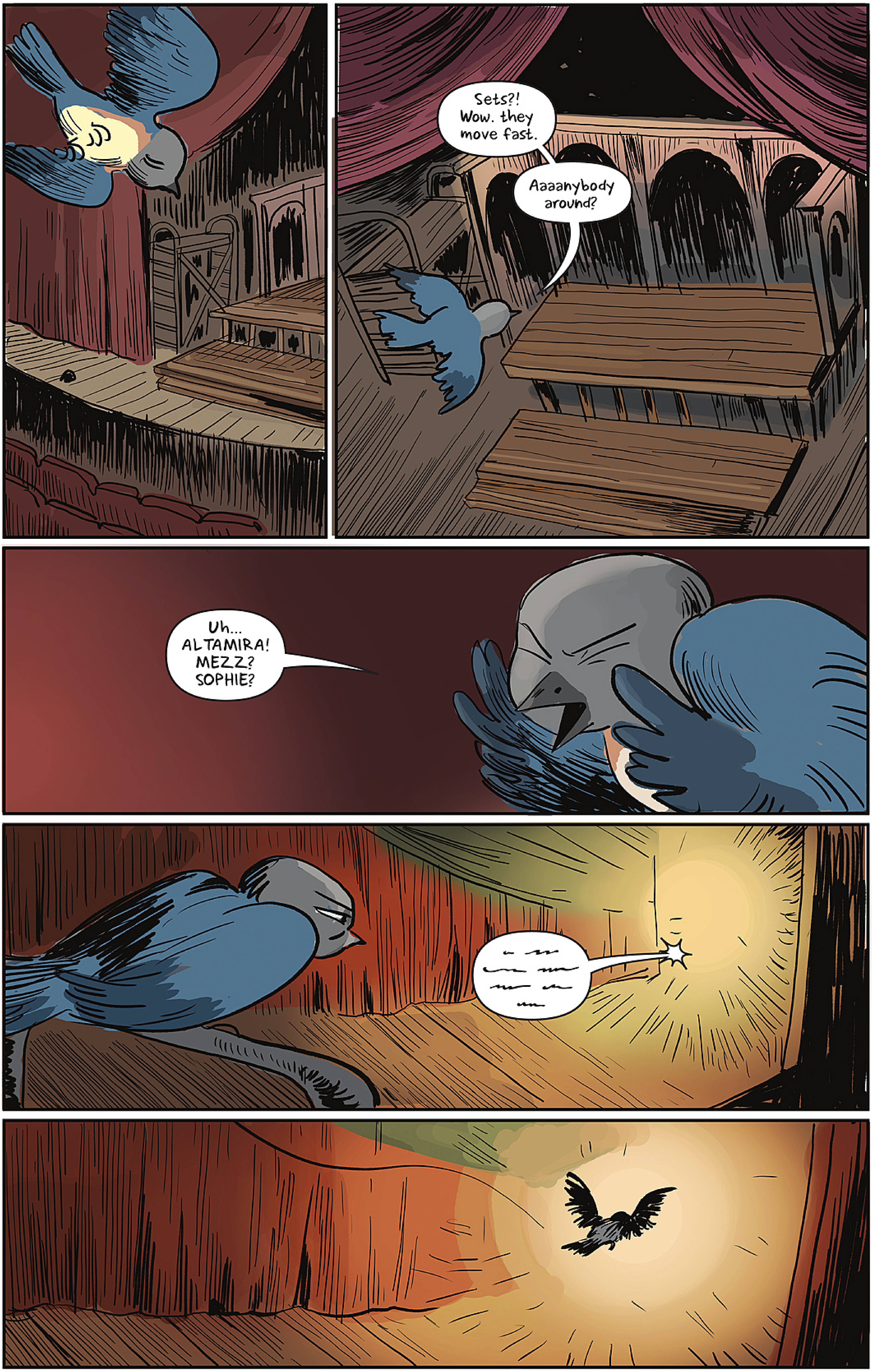

You've got that soulful kind of song One that makes the short days long One that echoes through the chasms and the cracks of every hall.
You sit there timid like a mouse With a voice that could bring down the house A lion's roar inside you, so creative so inspiring And it's the reason that we're dying To bring you on the stage.
Show the world just what you've got. Plant your feet upon that spot. Let the words in your mind ring Open up your mouth and sing....
Forget the lines, Wirt.
What does the song of a young hero sound like?

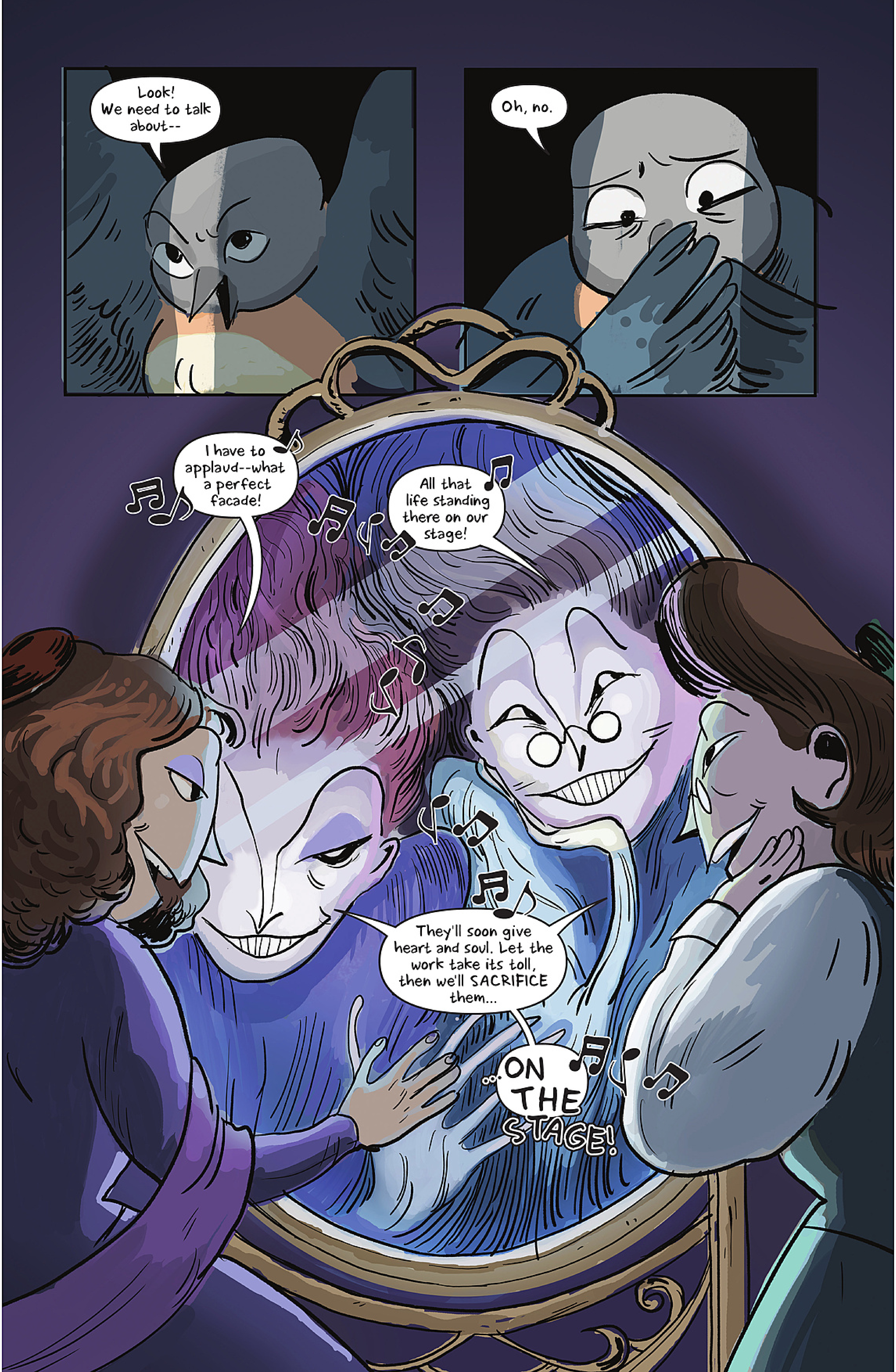

HAAAAH
I...I think it sounds like bravery...
And all the things I'm not.
It sounds like solving all your problems without a second thought.
I think he must be really strong
In both his arms and brain
But mainly, I think that he's not lame.
Good! Go on!
I don't think I'm a hero
I'm a lost kid at the best
I want to find my way home and take a long earned rest
But if I was someone
That wasn't just like me
I think I'd finally be free.
Yeah... it'd be nice, to be someone who's not me.

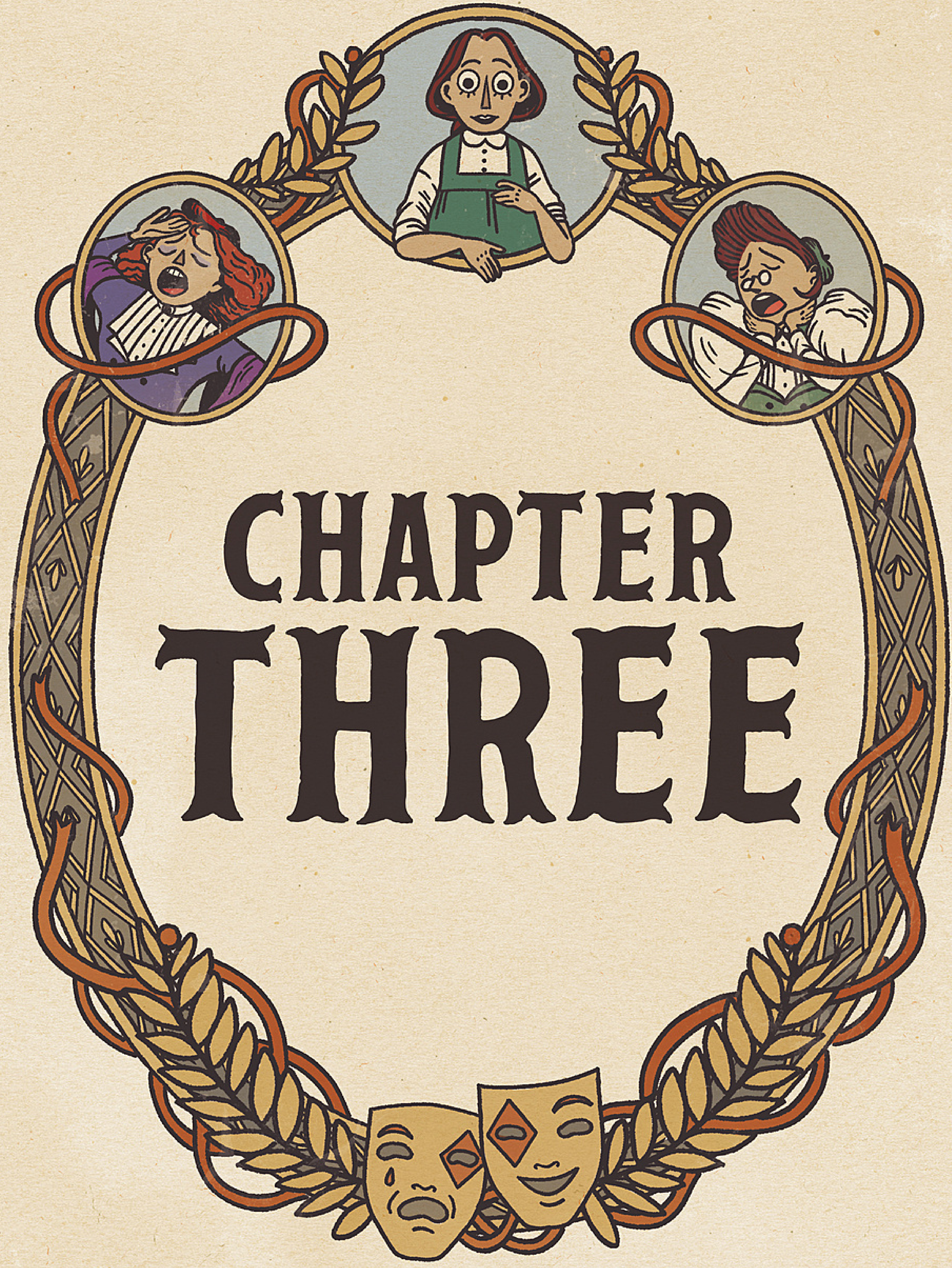

Huh?
How...
WIRT'S SONG
WIRT! That was spectacular!
Simply marvelous!
Oh, if only we could have had that song for the show!
Uh...I've got this?
What? It's like the song just leapt onto the page! But HOW?
Shh, Altamira, don't question it!
He's going to give us a performance TO DIE for.
WIRT'S SONG


So, Mezz and Altamira decided they want us to write our own songs for the show!
Even Greg?
Now, Sergeant, whoever made this print is the culprit.
We've gotta rule ourselves out. It's the only way to find them.
ROROP.
Even Greg.
Mhm.
Wow.
Look, they really seem to like what you're doing here.
And that's... good.
Are you apologizing?
What? No!
This whole thing seems weird, Wirt! Magically appearing music? A play conveniently missing two actors as TWO kids show up?

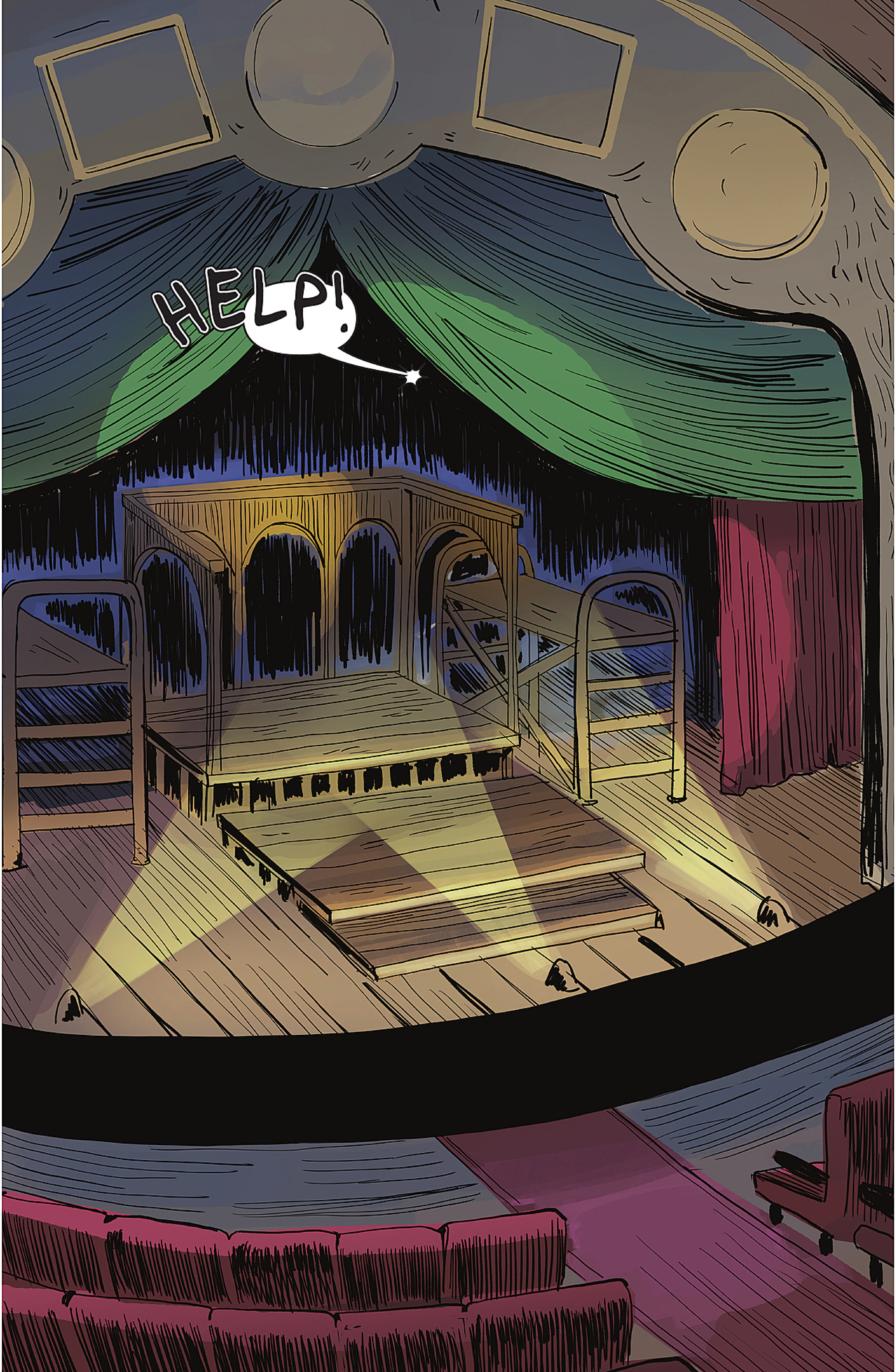

What's the play even about, Wirt?
You wouldn't understand.
Try me.
You're just trying to get me to quit, aren't you?
You still think I can't do it!
So music appears in my hands! So...so what? It's not any weirder than talking birds or pumpkin skeletons or...or anything else that's happened to me!
Well, I'm not going to listen to the naysayers!
I'm gonna be the best actor they've ever seen.
Who knows--maybe I'll just stay here!
WIRT!
YAAAAWWWWNNN
C'mon, Greg. Let's hit the hay.
The HAY. Of course! Right under our noses all along. Come on, Sergeant!

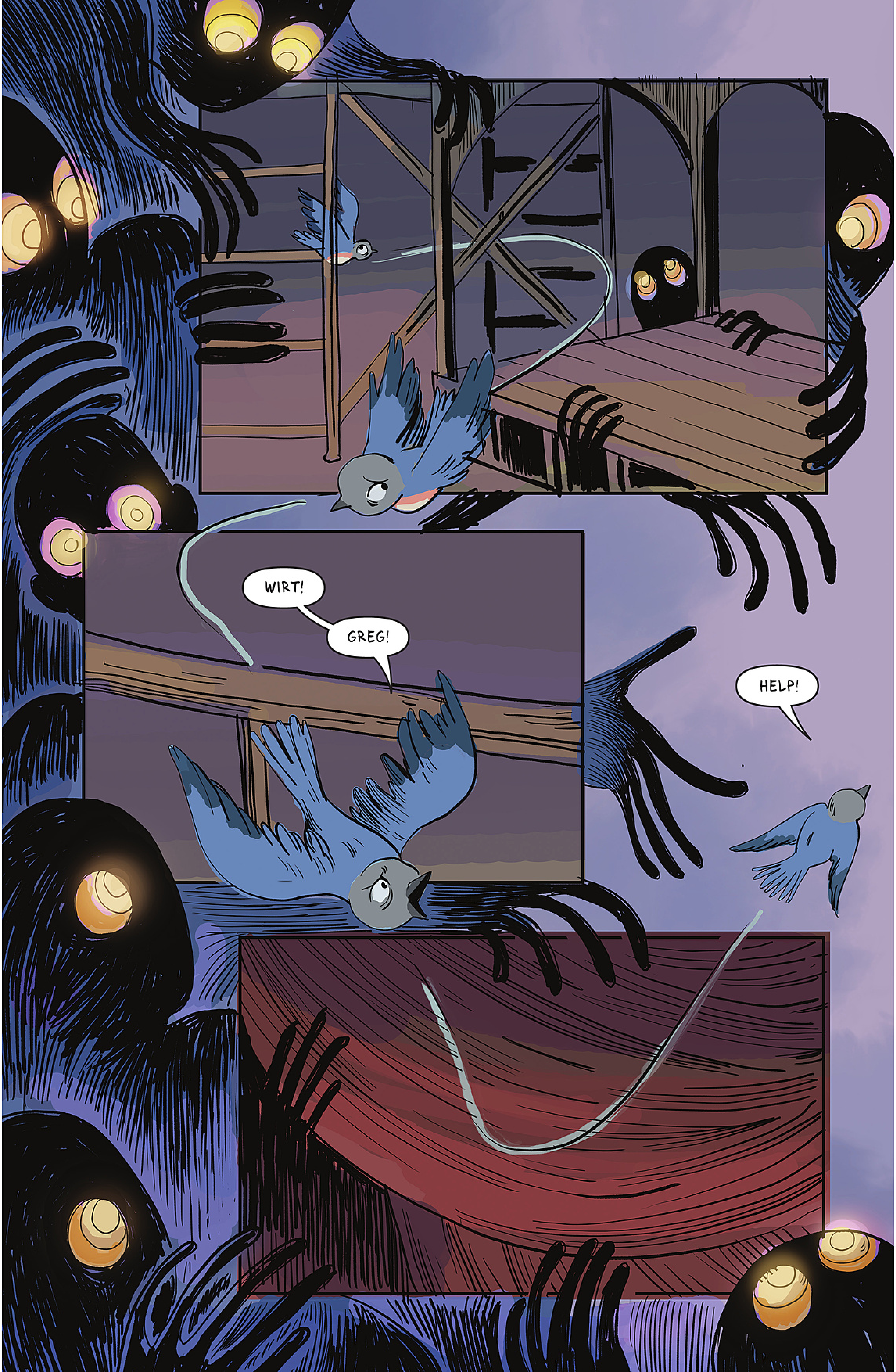

Sets?! Wow. they move fast.
Aaaanybody around?
Uh... ALTAMIRA! MEZZ? SOPHIE?

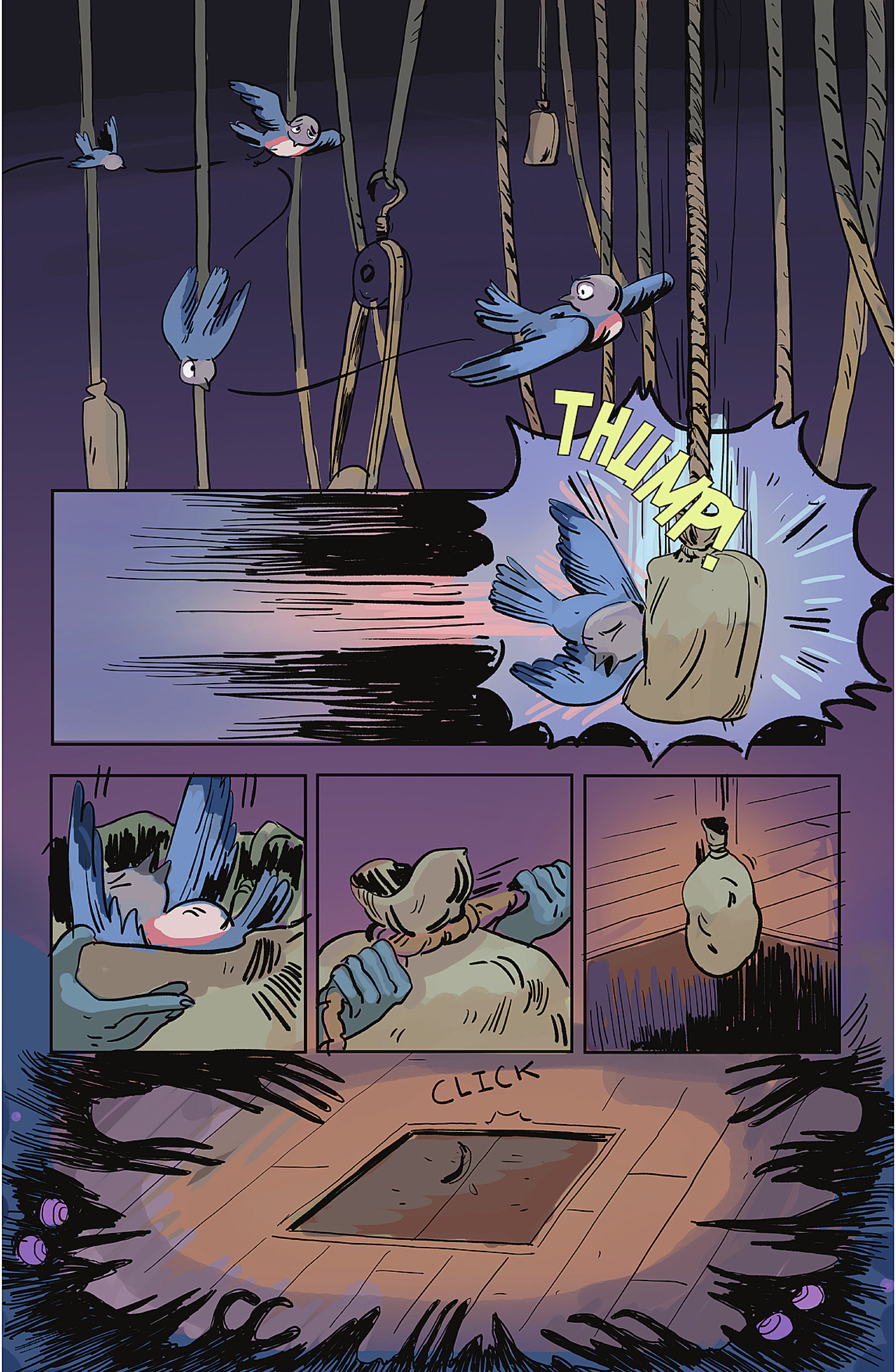

Look! We need to talk about--
Oh, no.
I have to applaud--what a perfect facade!
All that life standing there on our stage!
They'll soon give heart and soul. Let the work take its toll, then we'll SACRIFICE them...
...ON THE STAGE!

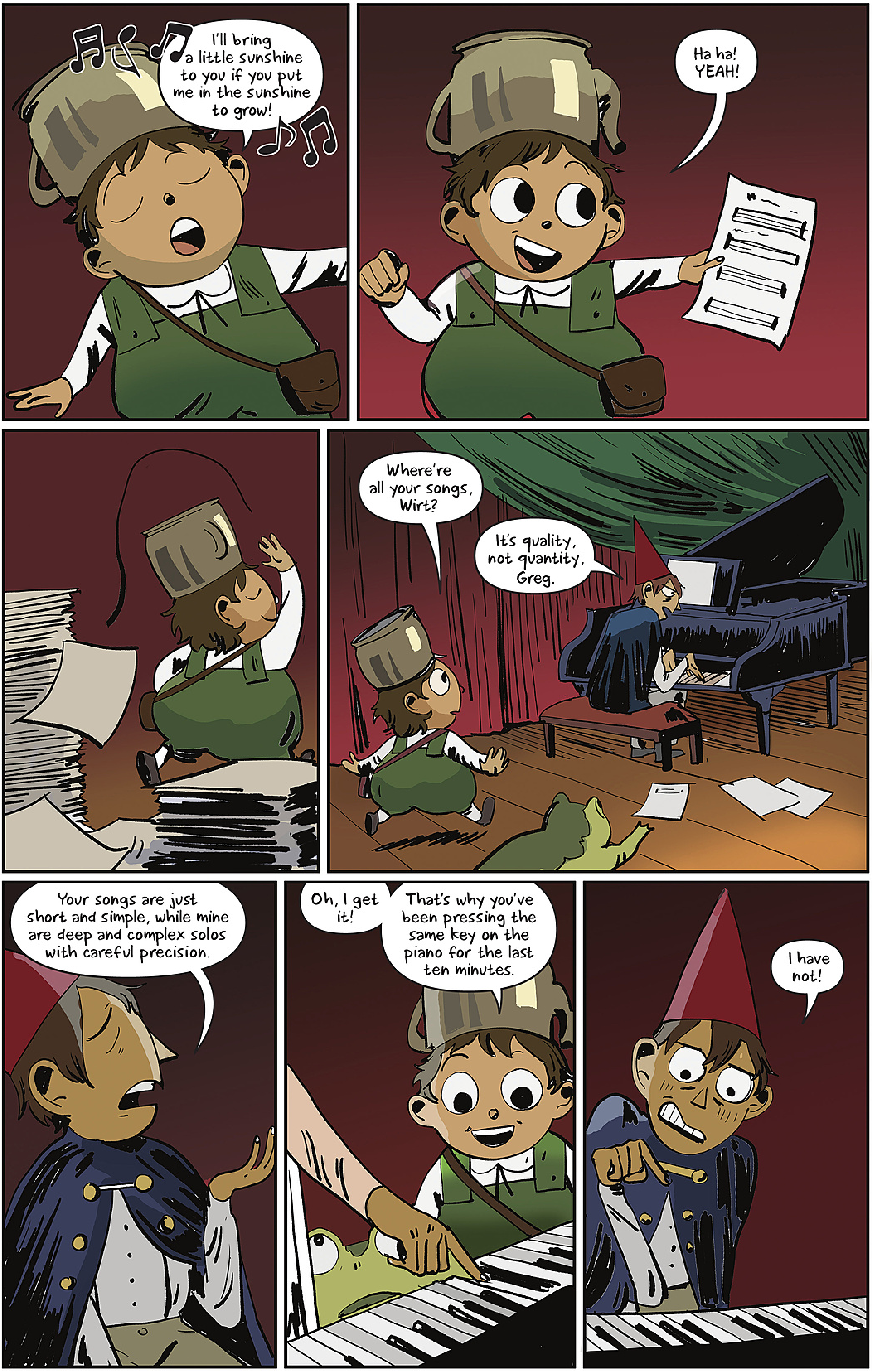


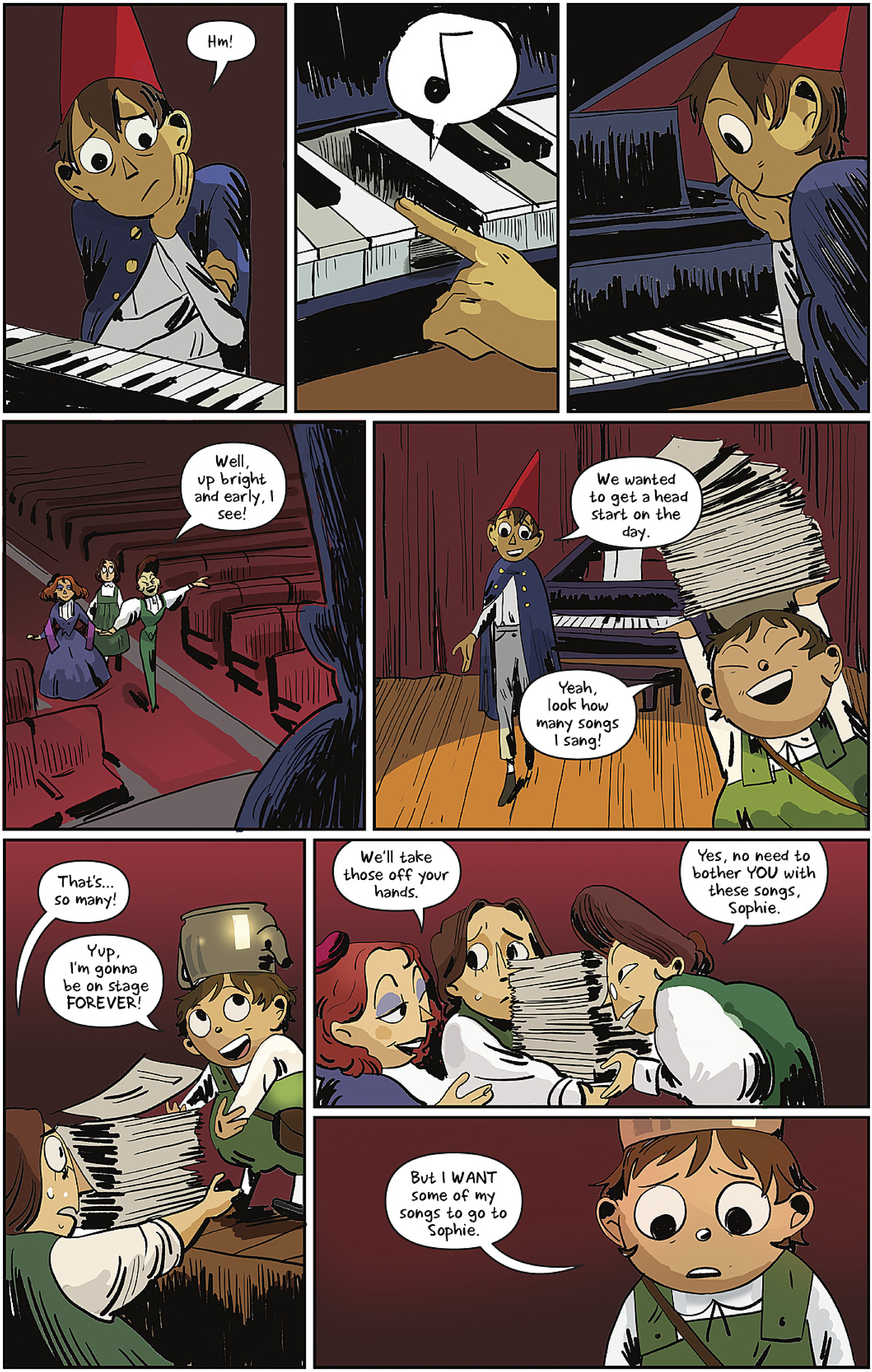
CHAPTER THREE

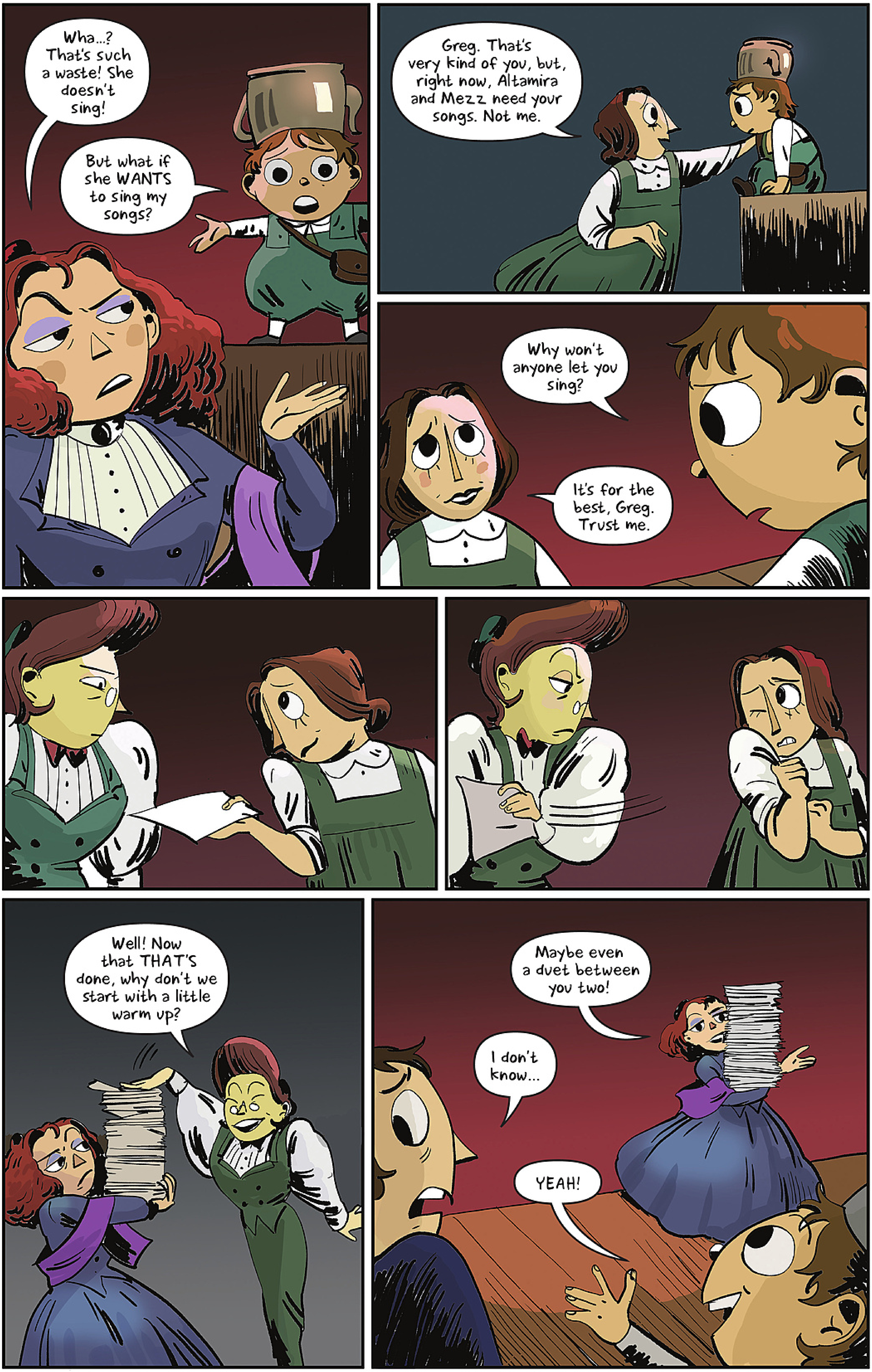

HELP!

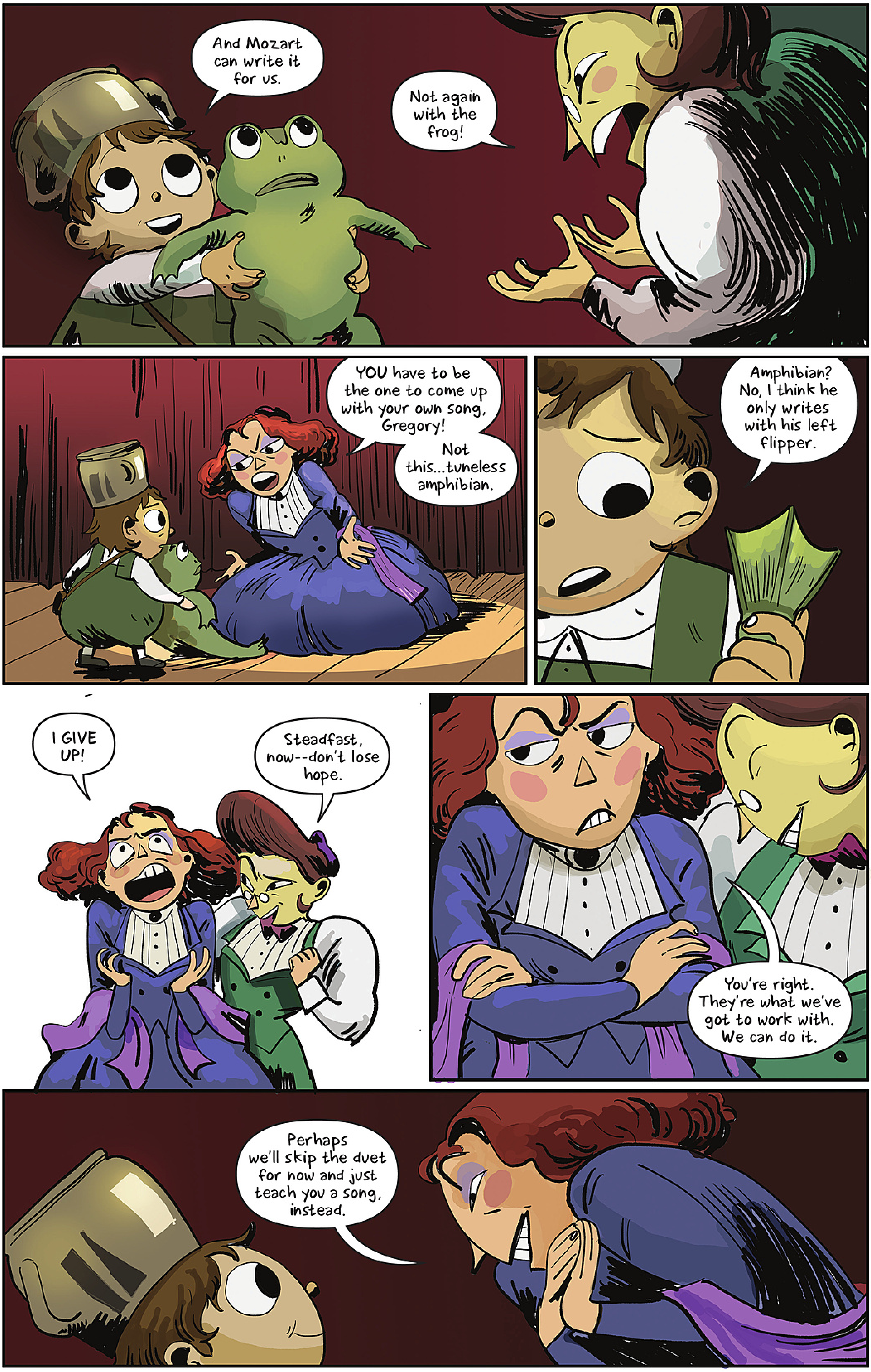

WIRT!
GREG!
HELP!

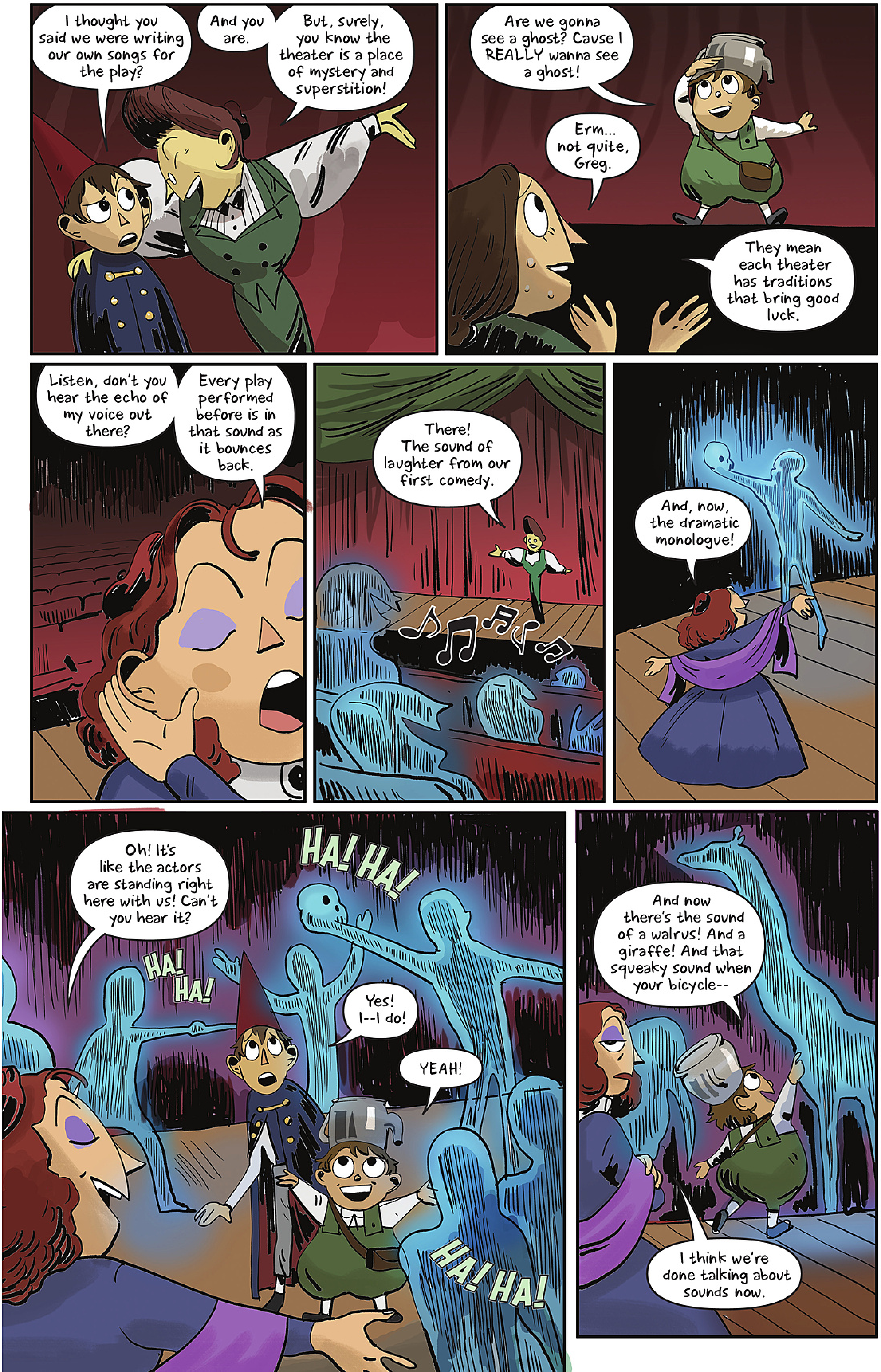

THUMP!
CLICK

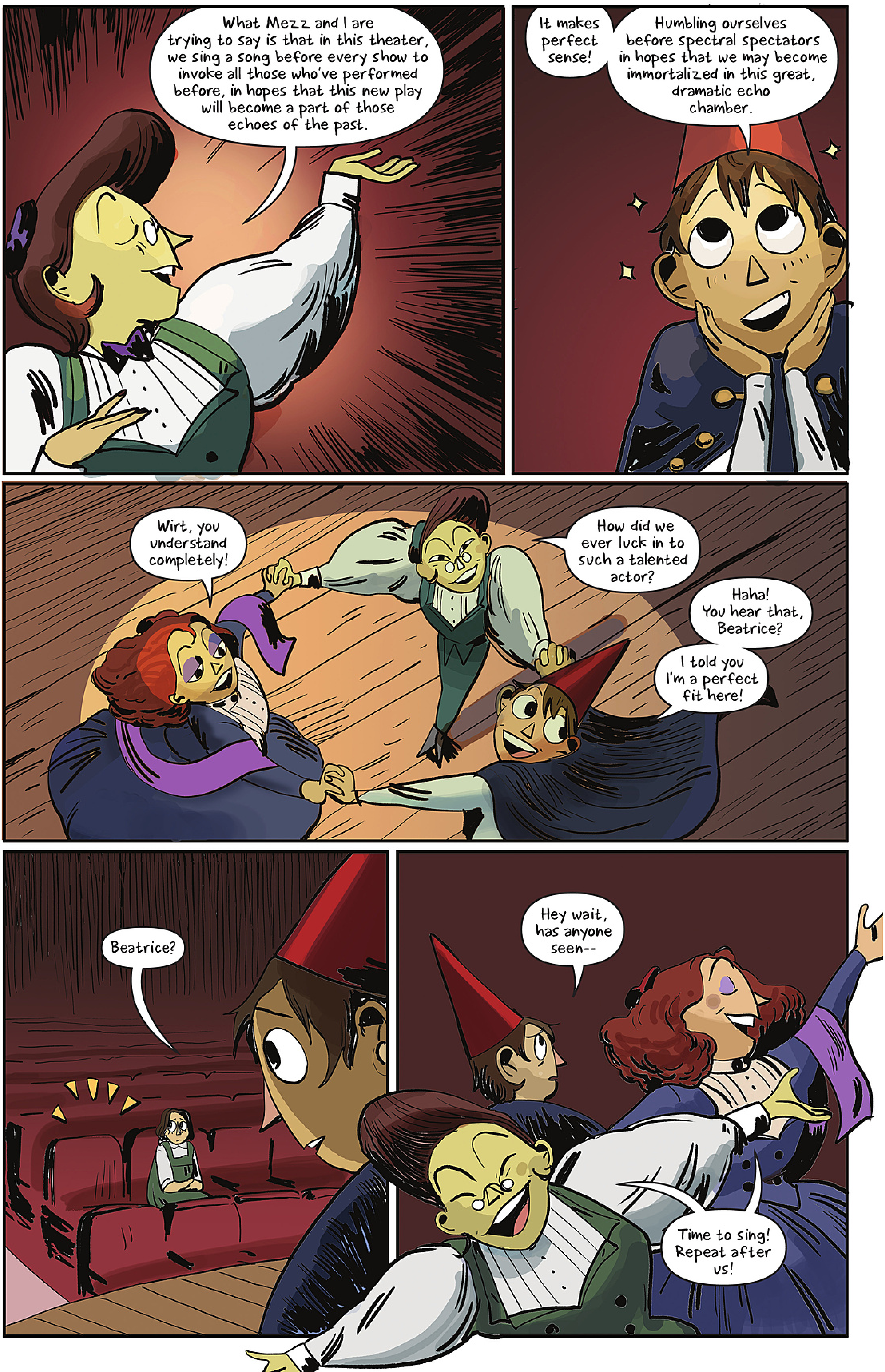

I'll bring a little sunshine to you if you put me in the sunshine to grow!
Ha ha! YEAH!
Where're all your songs, Wirt?
It's quality, not quantity, Greg.
Your songs are just short and simple, while mine are deep and complex solos with careful precision.
Oh, I get it!
That's why you've been pressing the same key on the piano for the last ten minutes.
I have not!

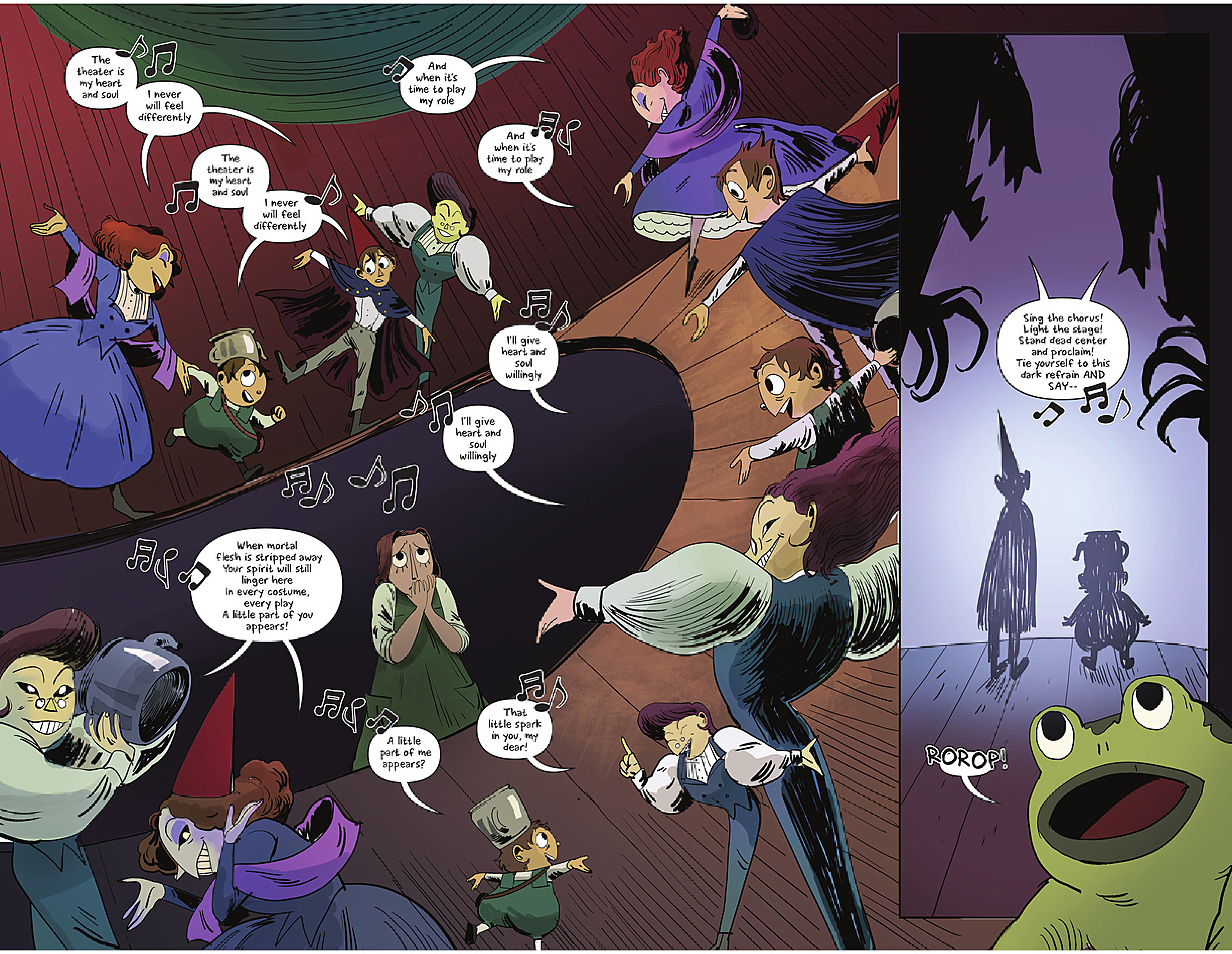

Hm!
♪
Well, up bright and early, I see!
We wanted to get a head start on the day.
Yeah, look how many songs I sang!
That's... so many!
Yup, I'm gonna be on stage FOREVER!
We'll take those off your hands.
Yes, no need to bother YOU with these songs, Sophie.
But I WANT some of my songs to go to Sophie.

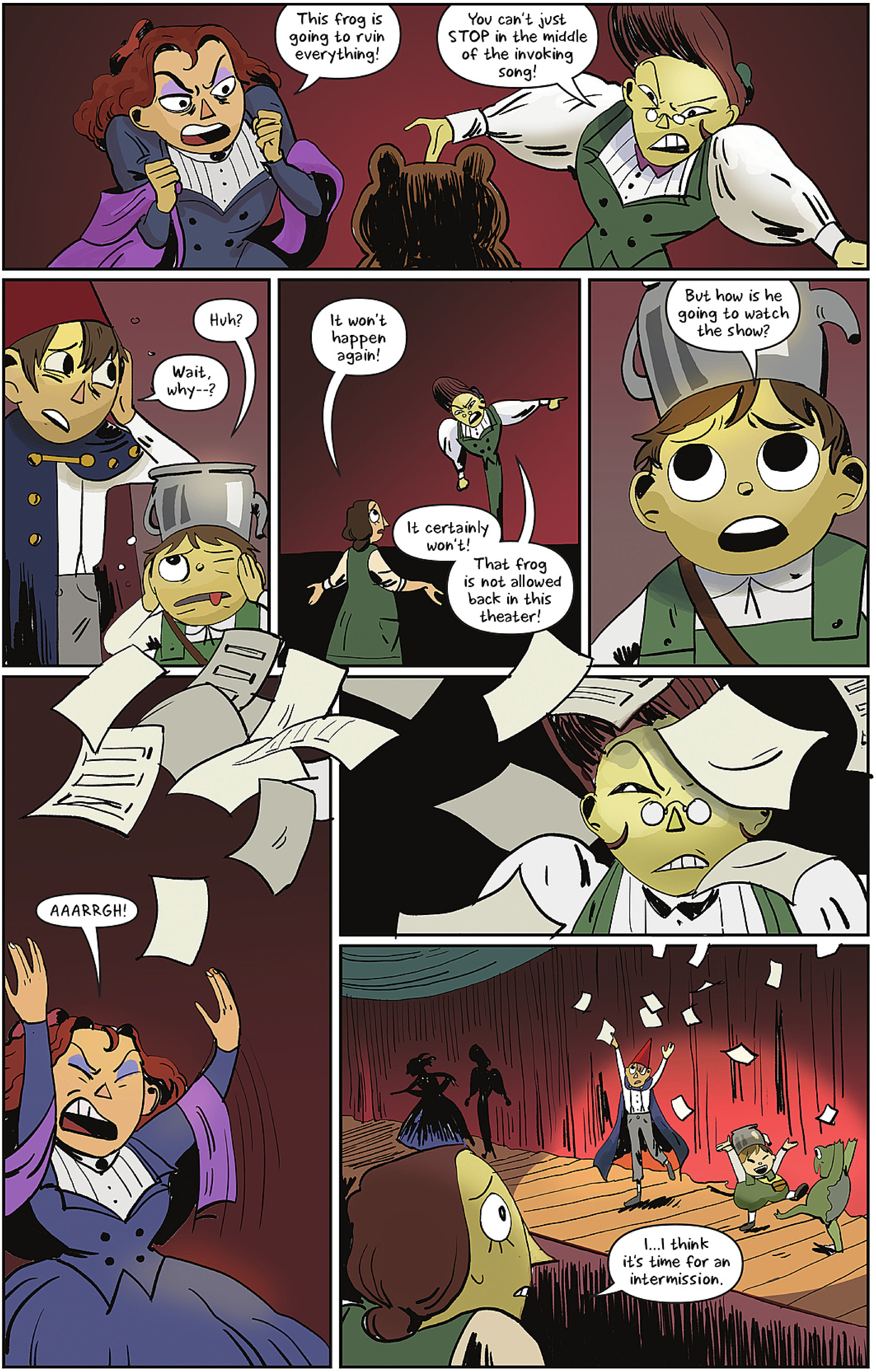

Wha...? That's such a waste! She doesn't sing!
But what if she WANTS to sing my songs?
Greg. That's very kind of you, but, right now, Altamira and Mezz need your songs. Not me.
Why won't anyone let you sing?
It's for the best, Greg. Trust me.
Well! Now that THAT'S done, why don't we start with a little warm up?
Maybe even a duet between you two!
I don't know...
YEAH!

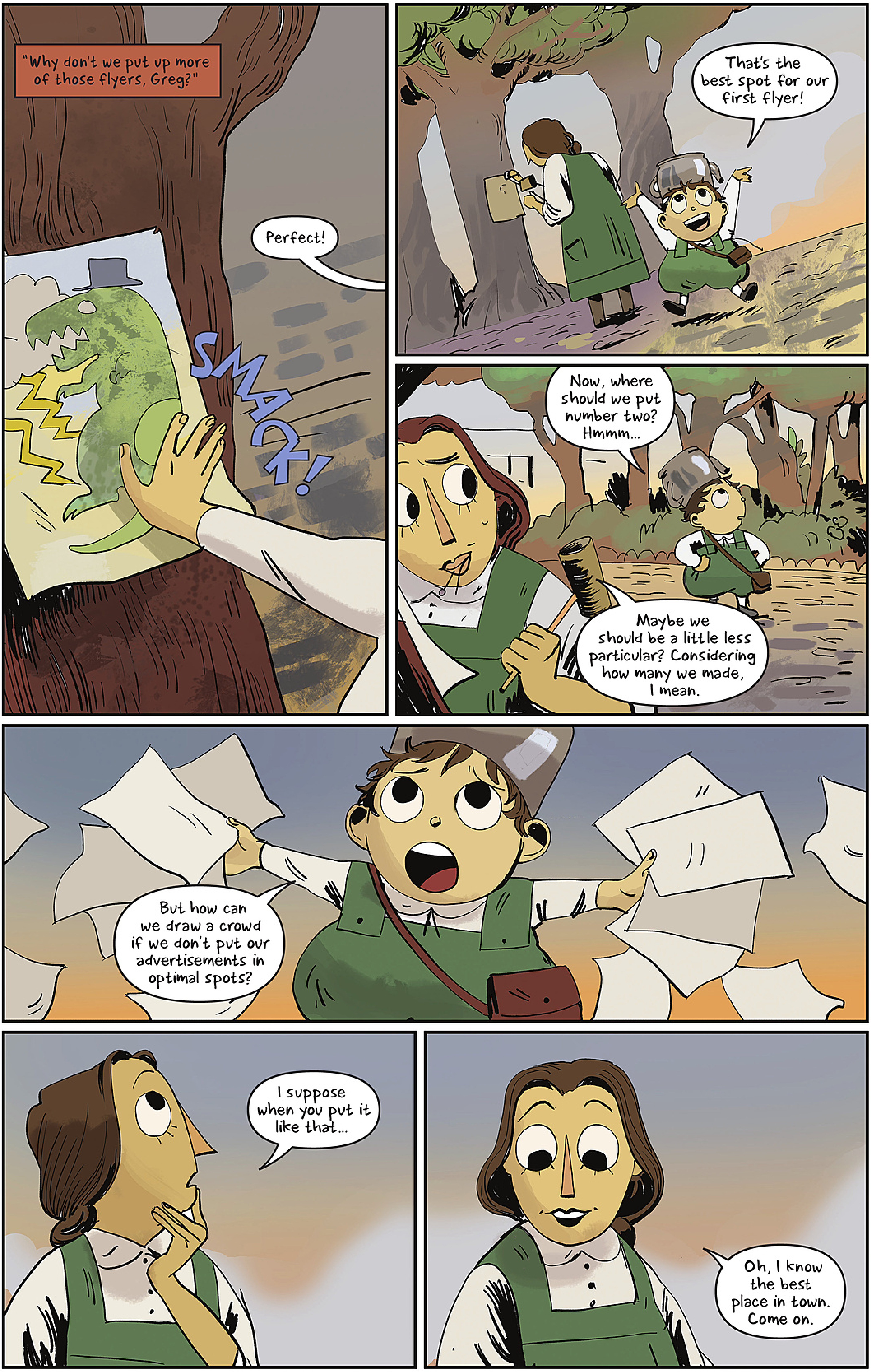

And Mozart can write it for us.
Not again with the frog!
YOU have to be the one to come up with your own song, Gregory!
Not this...tuneless amphibian.
Amphibian? No, I think he only writes with his left flipper.
I GIVE UP!
Steadfast, now--don't lose hope.
You're right. They're what we've got to work with. We can do it.
Perhaps we'll skip the duet for now and just teach you a song, instead.

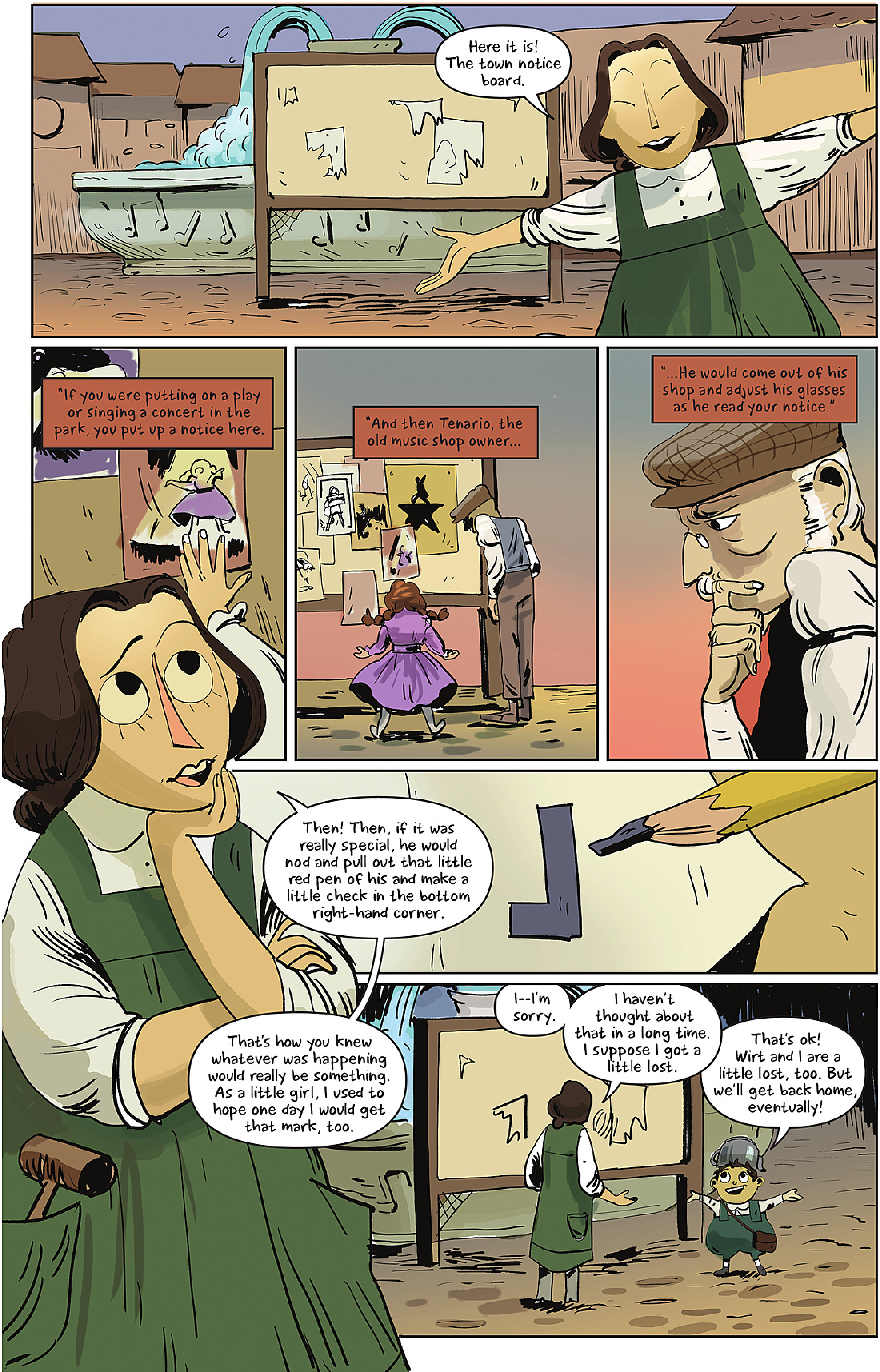

I thought you said we were writing our own songs for the play?
And you are.
But, surely, you know the theater is a place of mystery and superstition!
Are we gonna see a ghost? Cause I REALLY wanna see a ghost!
Erm... not quite, Greg.
They mean each theater has traditions that bring good luck.
Listen, don't you hear the echo of my voice out there?
Every play performed before is in that sound as it bounces back.
There! The sound of laughter from our first comedy.
And, now, the dramatic monologue!
Oh! It's like the actors are standing right here with us! Can't you hear it?
HA! HA!
HA! HA!
Yes! I--I do!
YEAH!
HA! HA!
And now there's the sound of a walrus! And a giraffe! And that squeaky sound when your bicycle--
I think we're done talking about sounds now.

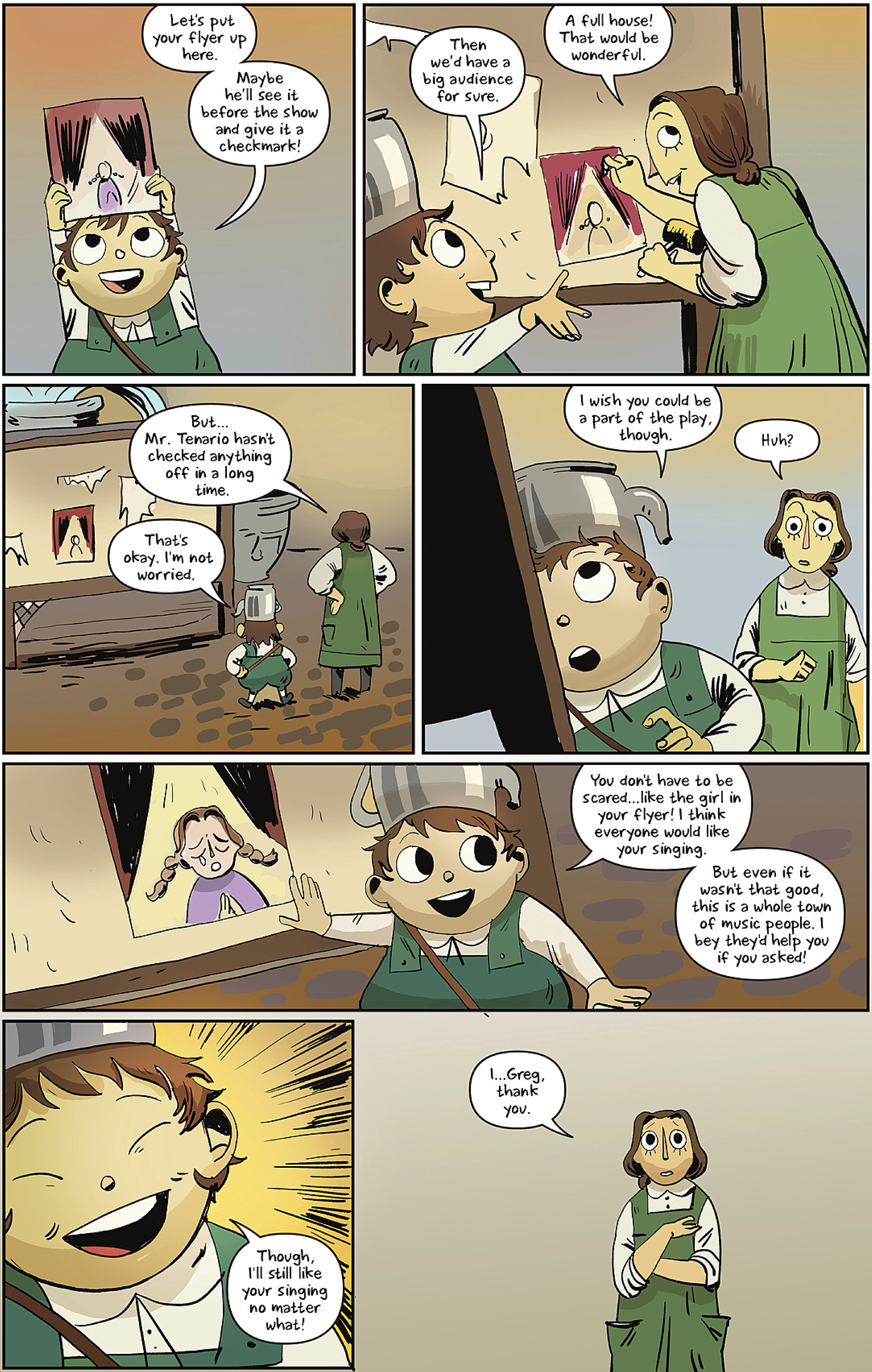

What Mezz and I are trying to say is that in this theater, we sing a song before every show to invoke all those who've performed before, in hopes that this new play will become a part of those echoes of the past.
It makes perfect sense!
Humbling ourselves before spectral spectators in hopes that we may become immortalized in this great, dramatic echo chamber.
Wirt, you understand completely!
How did we ever luck in to such a talented actor?
Haha! You hear that, Beatrice?
I told you I'm a perfect fit here!
Beatrice?
Hey wait, has anyone seen--
Time to sing! Repeat after us!

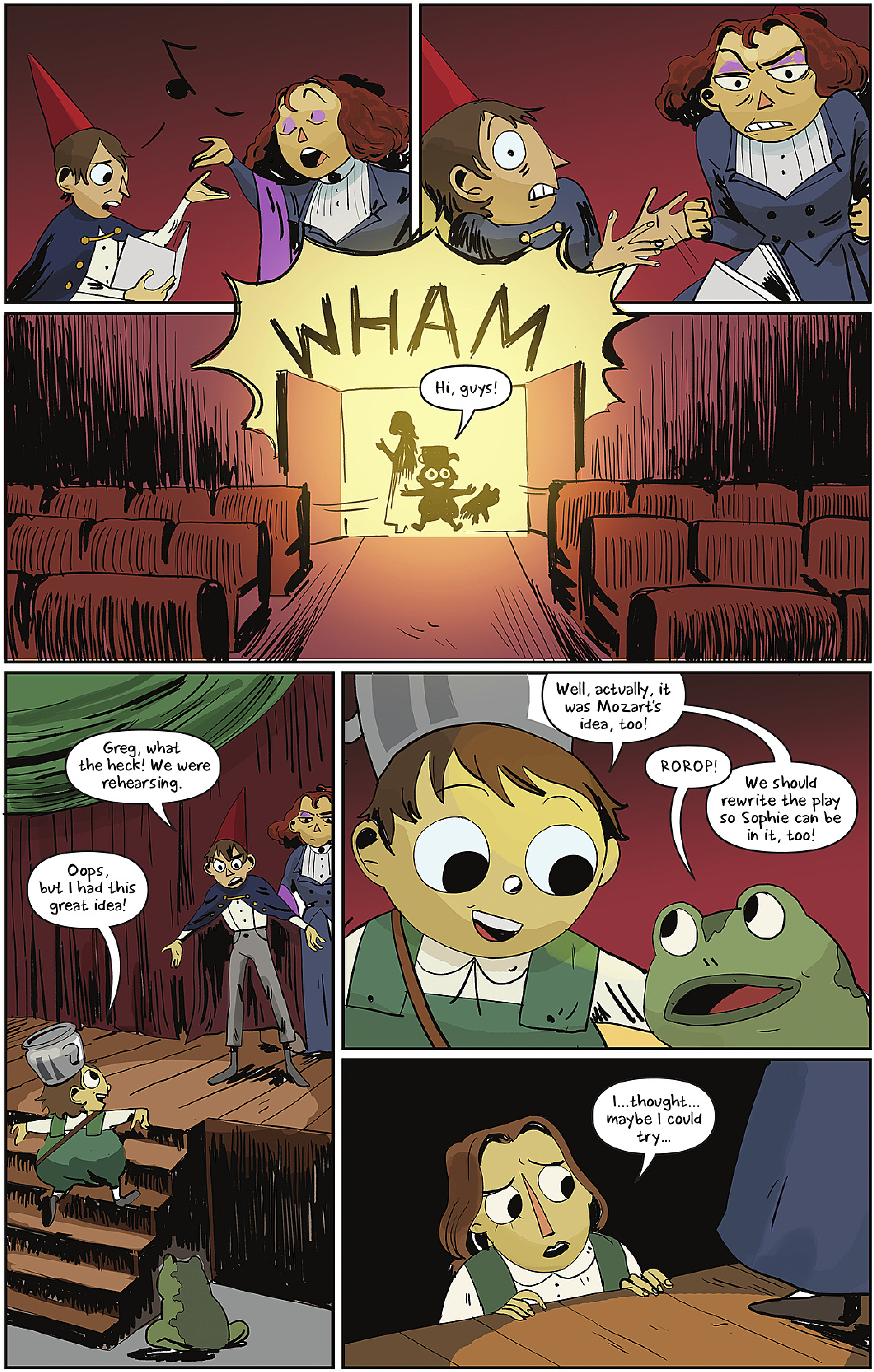

The theater is my heart and soul
I never will feel differently
And when it's time to play my role
And when it's time to play my role
The theater is my heart and soul
I never will feel differently
I'll give heart and soul willingly
I'll give heart and soul willingly
When mortal flesh is stripped away
Your spirit will still linger here
In every costume, every play
A little part of you appears!
A little part of me appears?
That little spark in you, my dear!
Sing the chorus! Light the stage! Stand dead center and proclaim! Tie yourself to this dark refrain AND SAY--
ROROP!

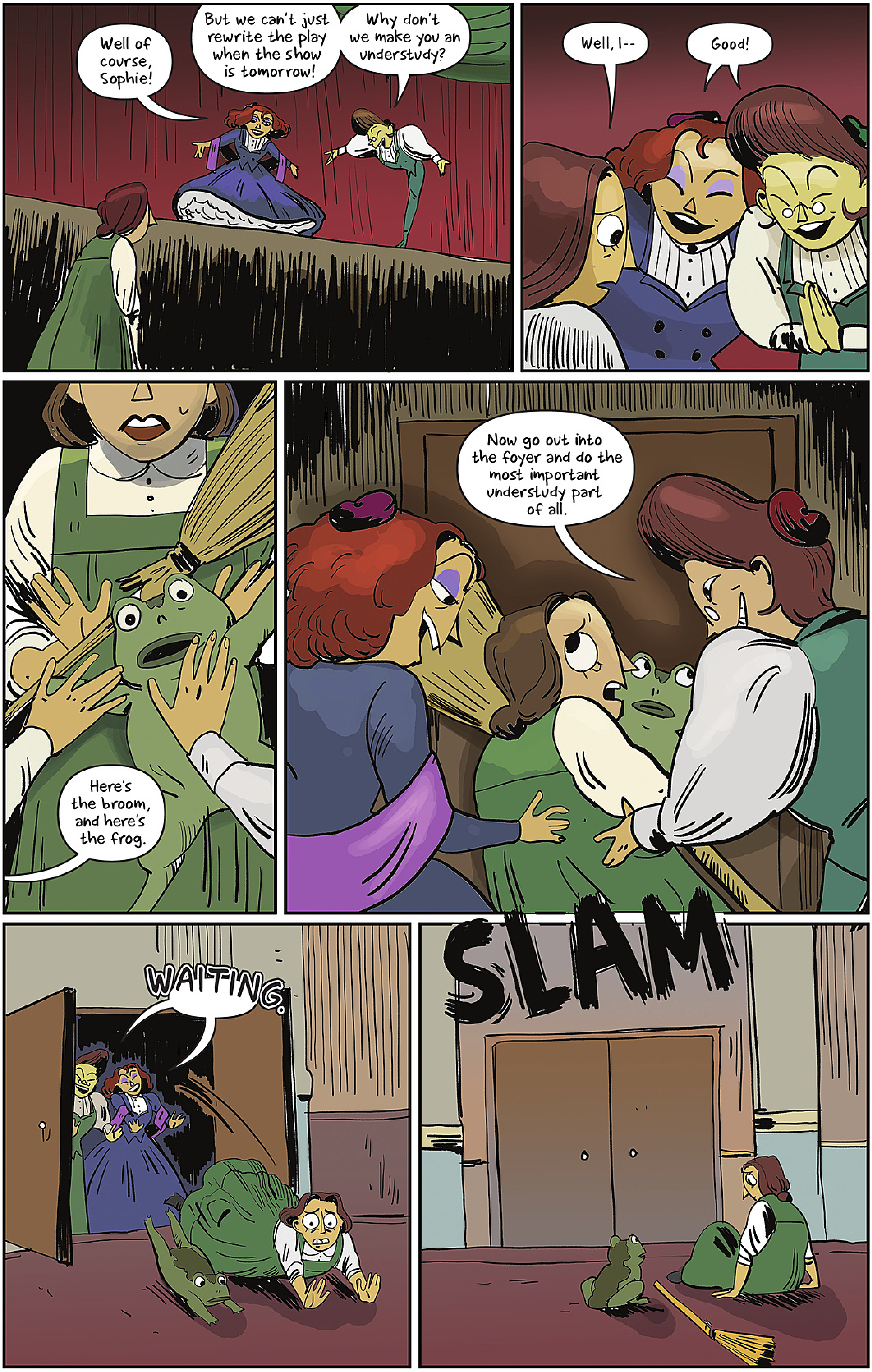

This frog is going to ruin everything!
You can't just STOP in the middle of the invoking song!
Huh?
Wait, why--?
It won't happen again!
It certainly won't!
That frog is not allowed back in this theater!
But how is he going to watch the show?
AAARRGH!
I...I think it's time for an intermission.

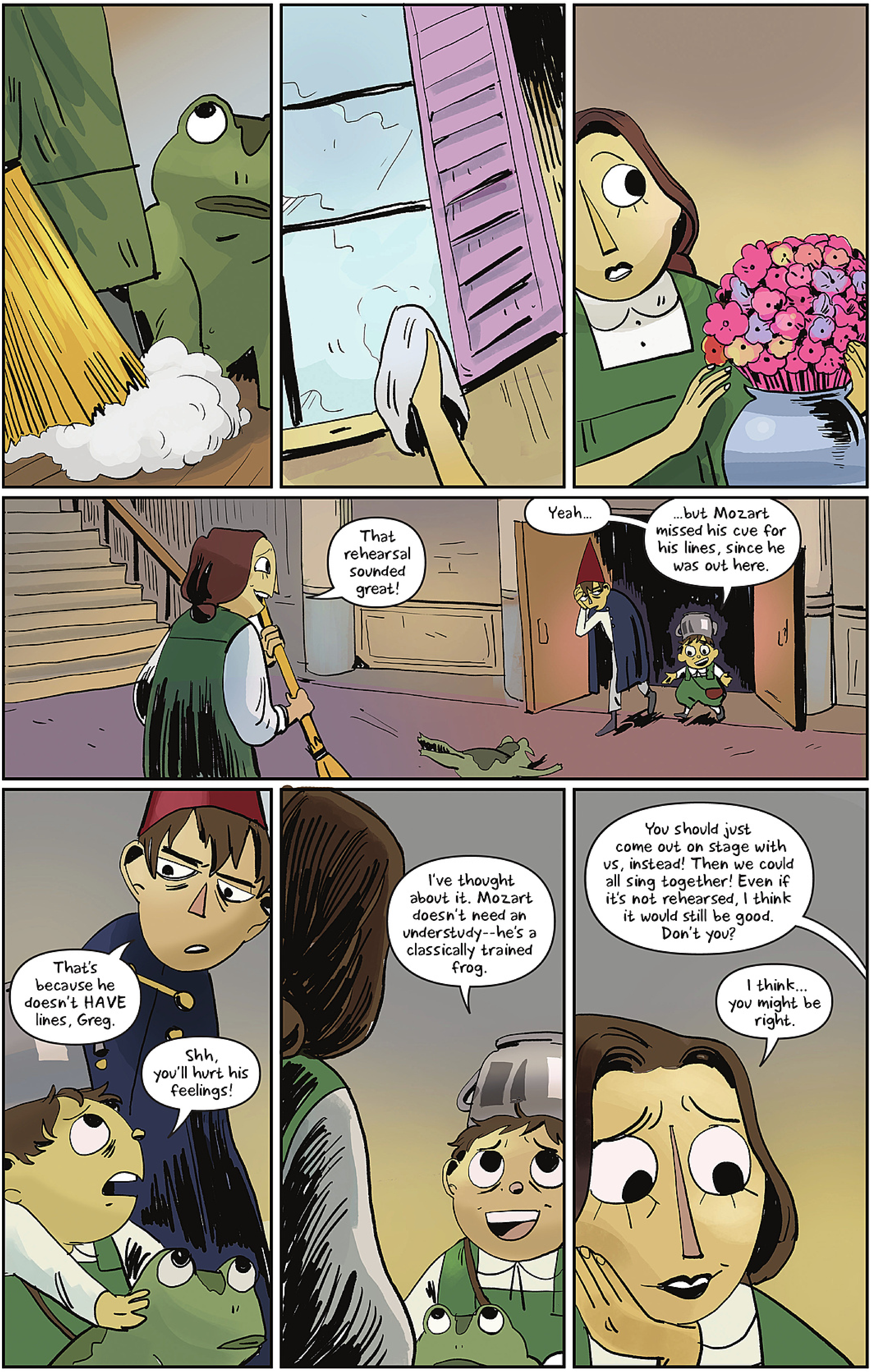

"Why don't we put up more of those flyers, Greg?"
Perfect!
SMACK!
That's the best spot for our first flyer!
Now, where should we put number two? Hmmm...
Maybe we should be a little less particular? Considering how many we made, I mean.
But how can we draw a crowd if we don't put our advertisements in optimal spots?
I suppose when you put it like that...
Oh, I know the best place in town. Come on.

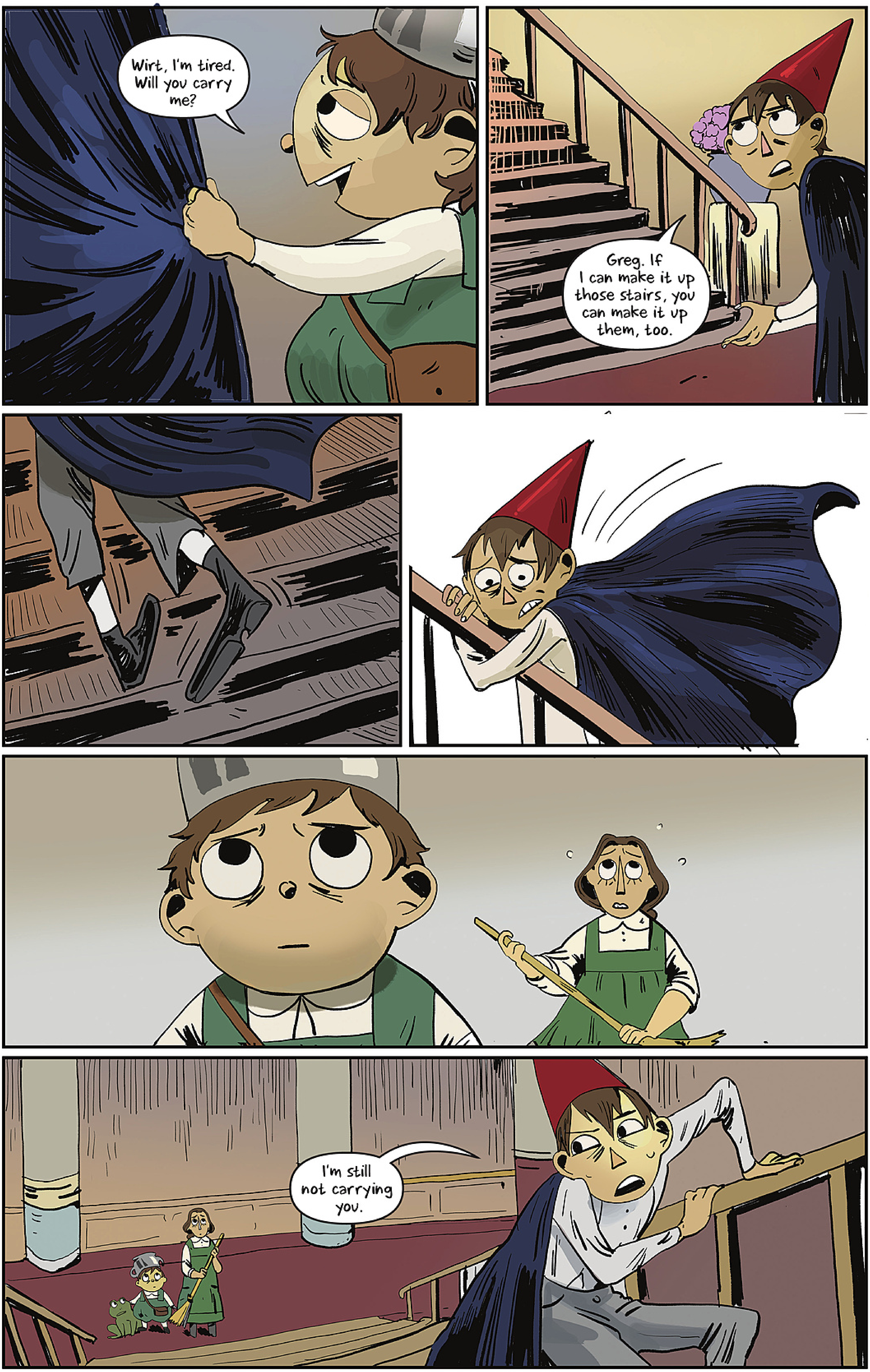

Here it is! The town notice board.
"If you were putting on a play or singing a concert in the park, you put up a notice here.
"And then Tenario, the old music shop owner...
"...He would come out of his shop and adjust his glasses as he read your notice."
Then! Then, if it was really special, he would nod and pull out that little red pen of his and make a little check in the bottom right-hand corner.
That's how you knew whatever was happening would really be something. As a little girl, I used to hope one day I would get that mark, too.
I--I'm sorry.
I haven't thought about that in a long time. I suppose I got a little lost.
That's ok! Wirt and I are a little lost, too. But we'll get back home, eventually!

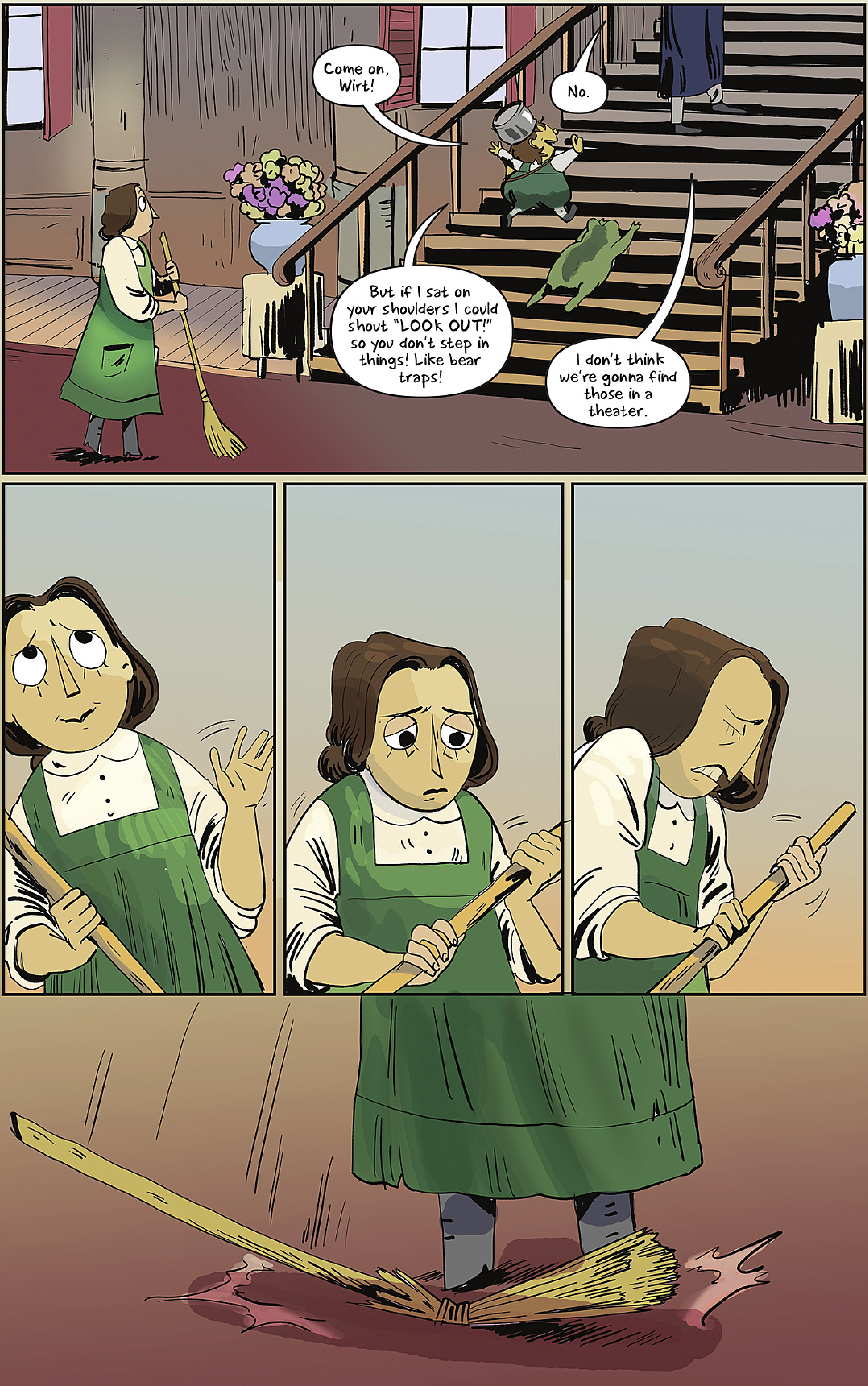

Let's put your flyer up here.
Maybe he'll see it before the show and give it a checkmark!
Then we'd have a big audience for sure.
A full house! That would be wonderful.
But... Mr. Tenario hasn't checked anything off in a long time.
That's okay. I'm not worried.
I wish you could be a part of the play, though.
Huh?
You don't have to be scared...like the girl in your flyer! I think everyone would like your singing.
But even if it wasn't that good, this is a whole town of music people. I bey they'd help you if you asked!
Though, I'll still like your singing no matter what!
I...Greg, thank you.

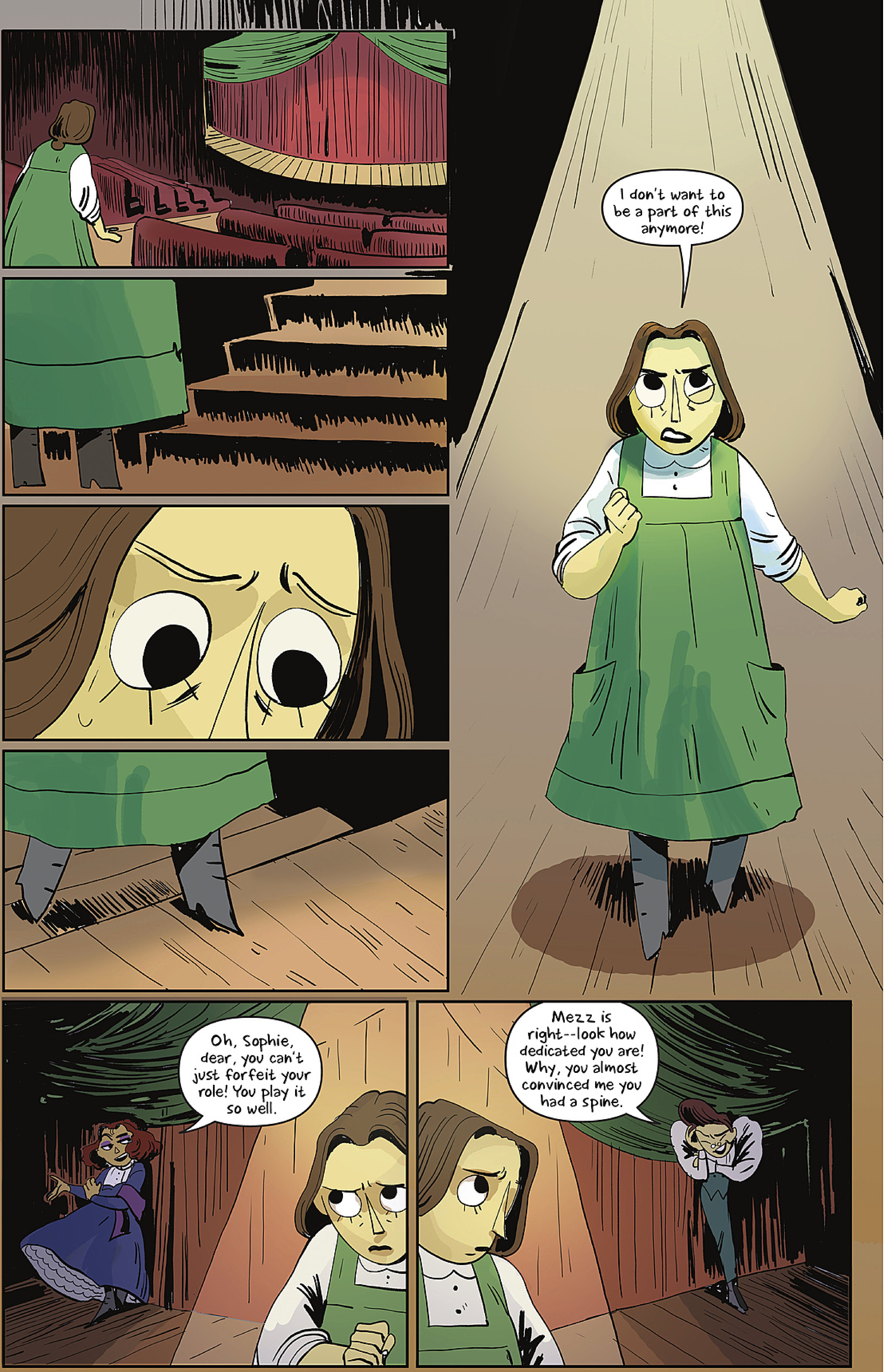

WHAM
Hi, guys!
Greg, what the heck! We were rehearsing.
Oops, but I had this great idea!
Well, actually, it was Mozart's idea, too!
ROROP!
We should rewrite the play so Sophie can be in it, too!
I...thought... maybe I could try...

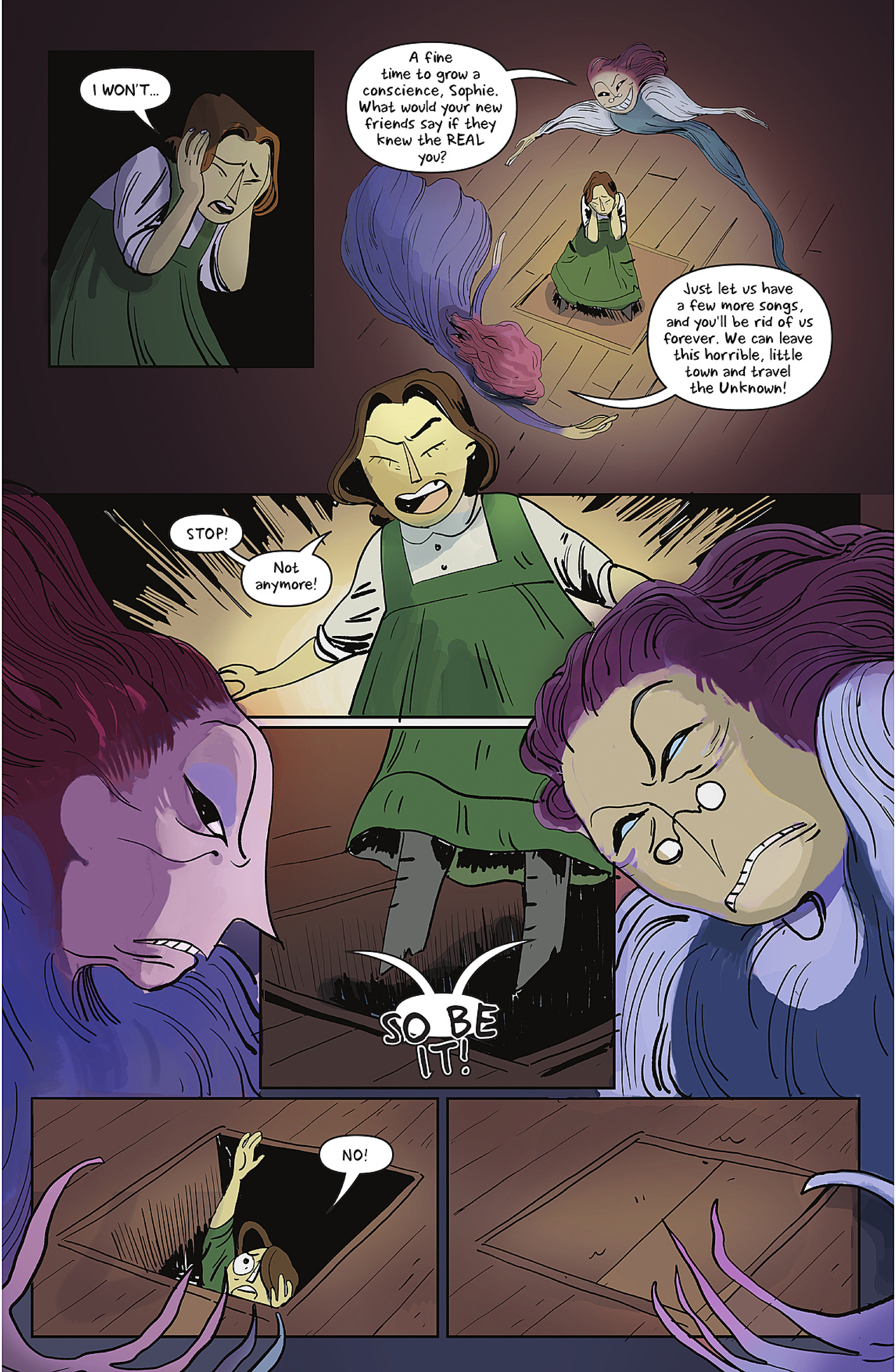

Well of course, Sophie!
But we can't just rewrite the play when the show is tomorrow!
Why don't we make you an understudy?
Well, I--
Good!
Here's the broom, and here's the frog.
Now go out into the foyer and do the most important understudy part of all.
WAITING.
SLAM

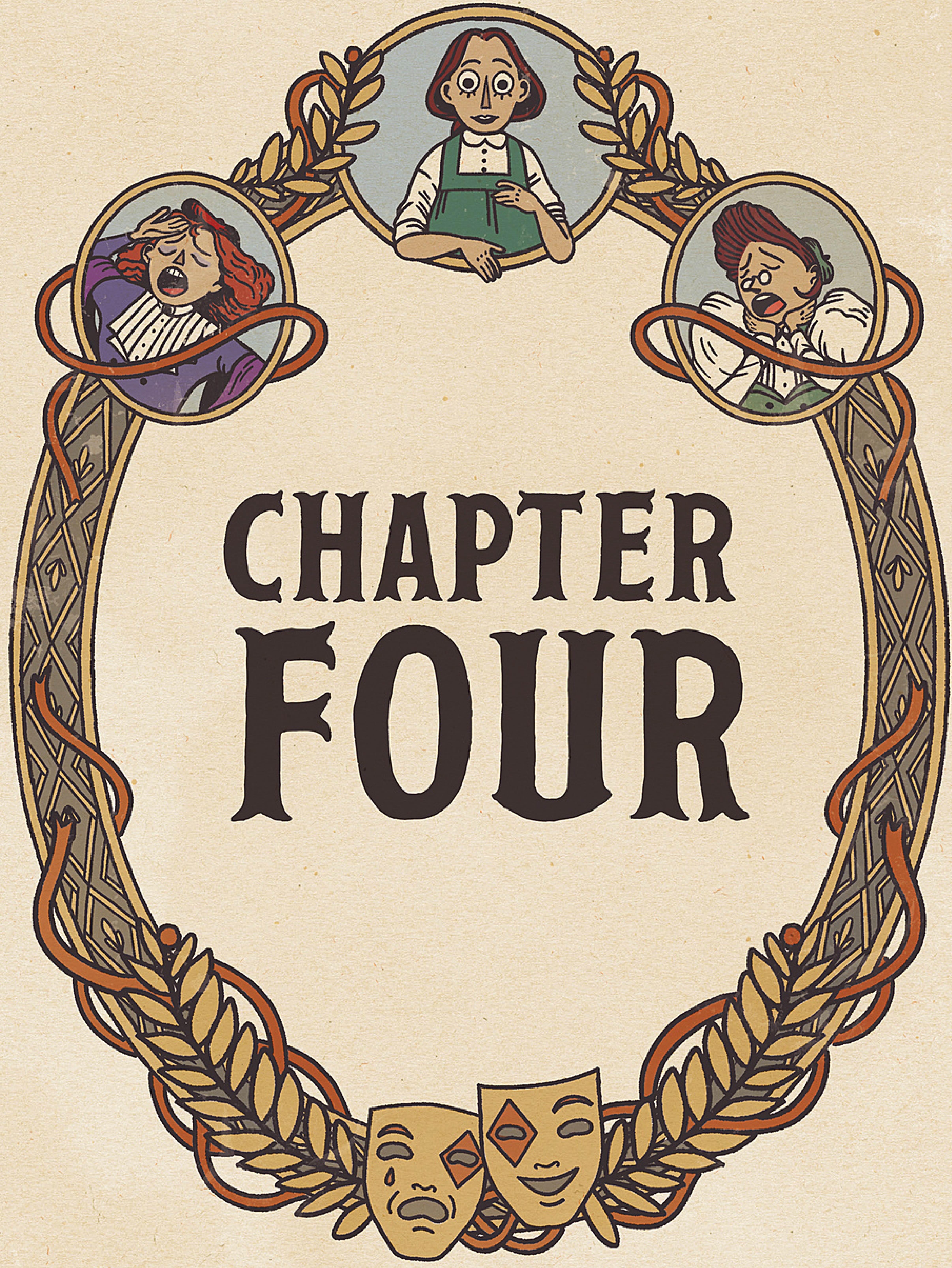

That rehearsal sounded great!
Yeah...
...but Mozart missed his cue for his lines, since he was out here.
That's because he doesn't HAVE lines, Greg.
Shh, you'll hurt his feelings!
I've thought about it. Mozart doesn't need an understudy--he's a classically trained frog.
You should just come out on stage with us, instead! Then we could all sing together! Even if it's not rehearsed, I think it would still be good. Don't you?
I think... you might be right.


Wirt, I'm tired. Will you carry me?
Greg. If I can make it up those stairs, you can make it up them, too.
I'm still not carrying you.

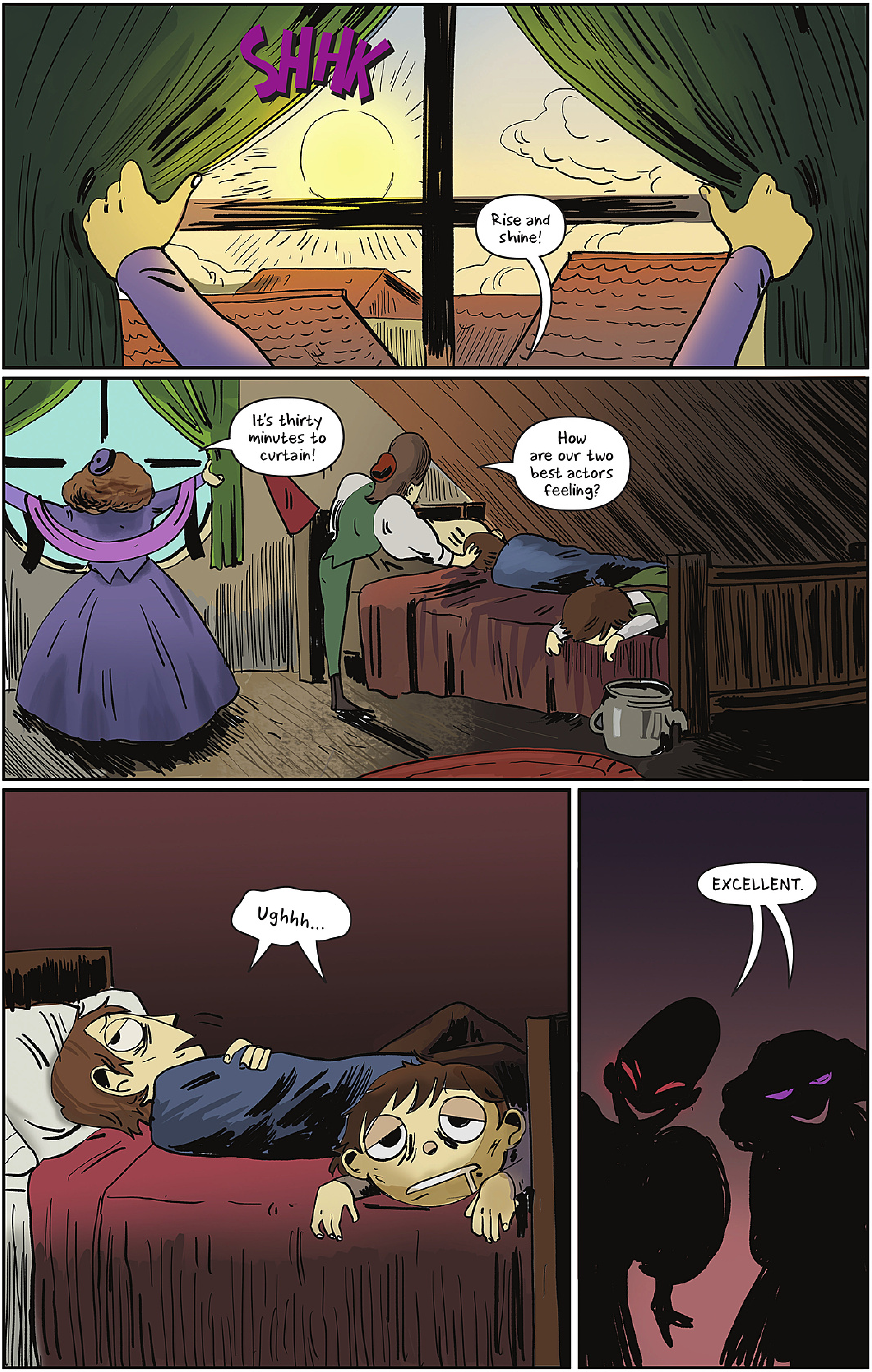

Come on, Wirt!
No.
But if I sat on your shoulders I could shout "LOOK OUT!" so you don't step in things! Like bear traps!
I don't think we're gonna find those in a theater.

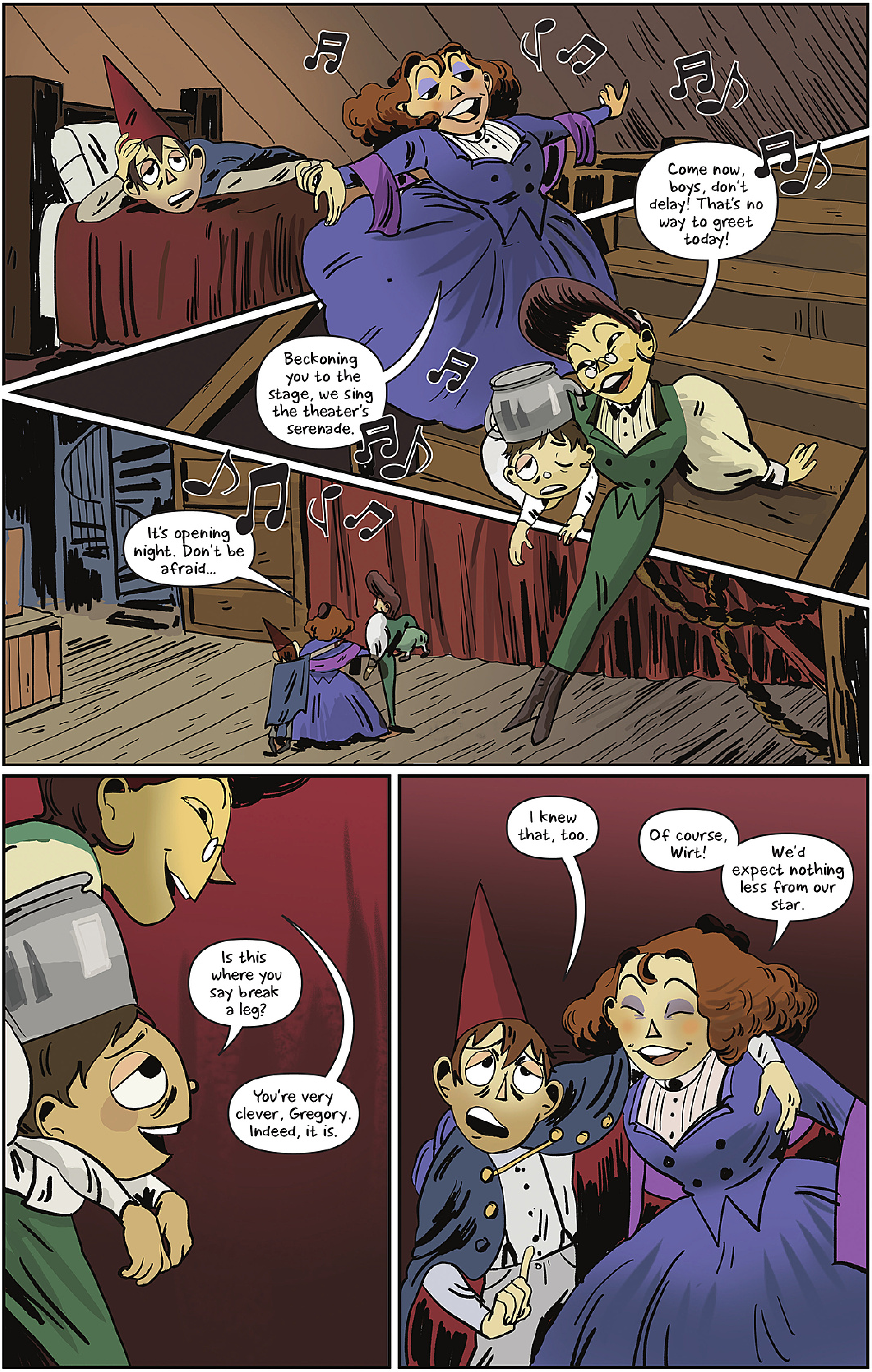

I don't want to be a part of this anymore!
Oh, Sophie, dear, you can't just forfeit your role! You play it so well.
Mezz is right--look how dedicated you are! Why, you almost convinced me you had a spine.

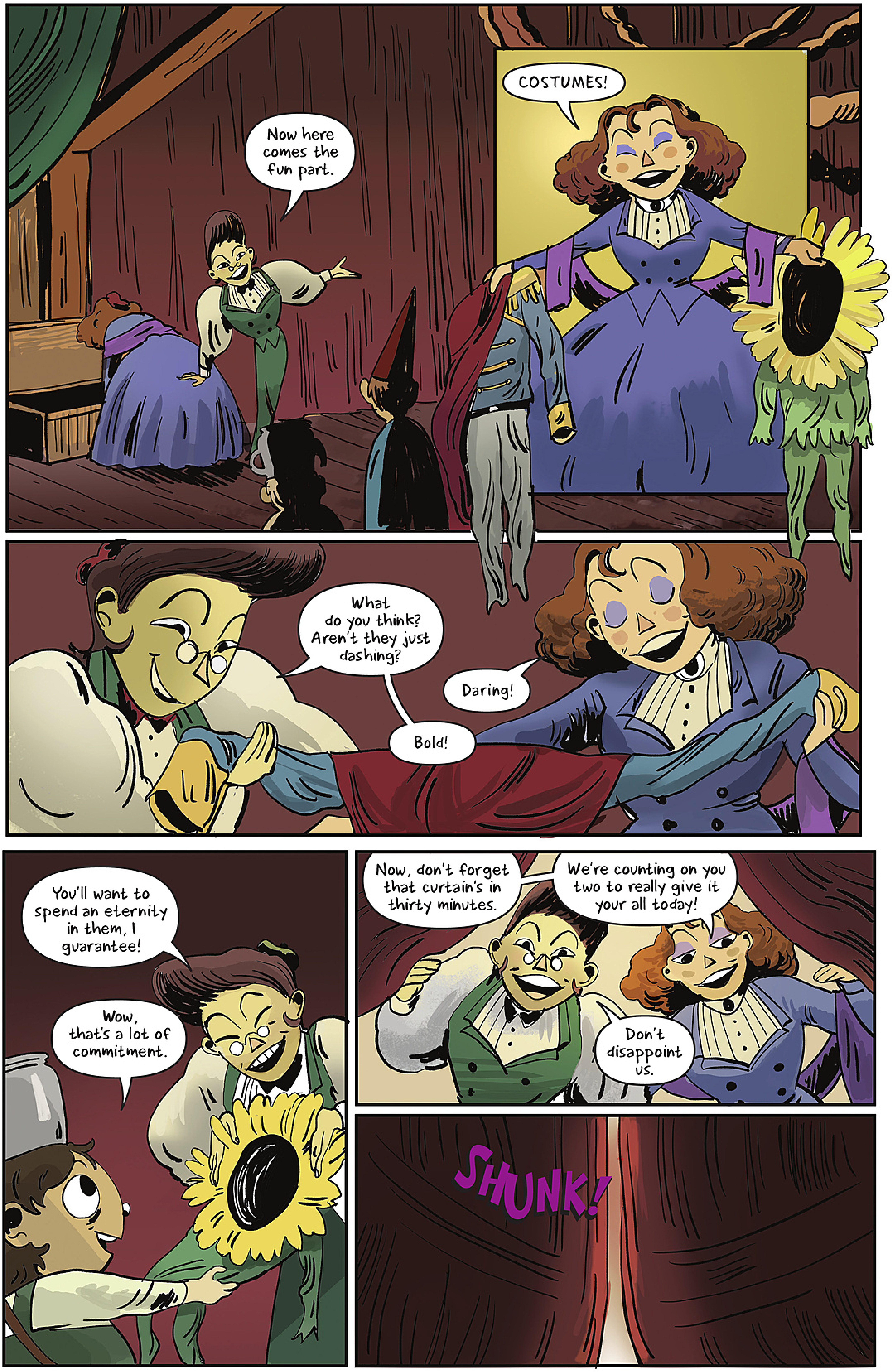

I WON'T...
A fine time to grow a conscience, Sophie. What would your new friends say if they knew the REAL you?
Just let us have a few more songs, and you'll be rid of us forever. We can leave this horrible, little town and travel the Unknown!
STOP!
Not anymore!
SO BE IT!
NO!

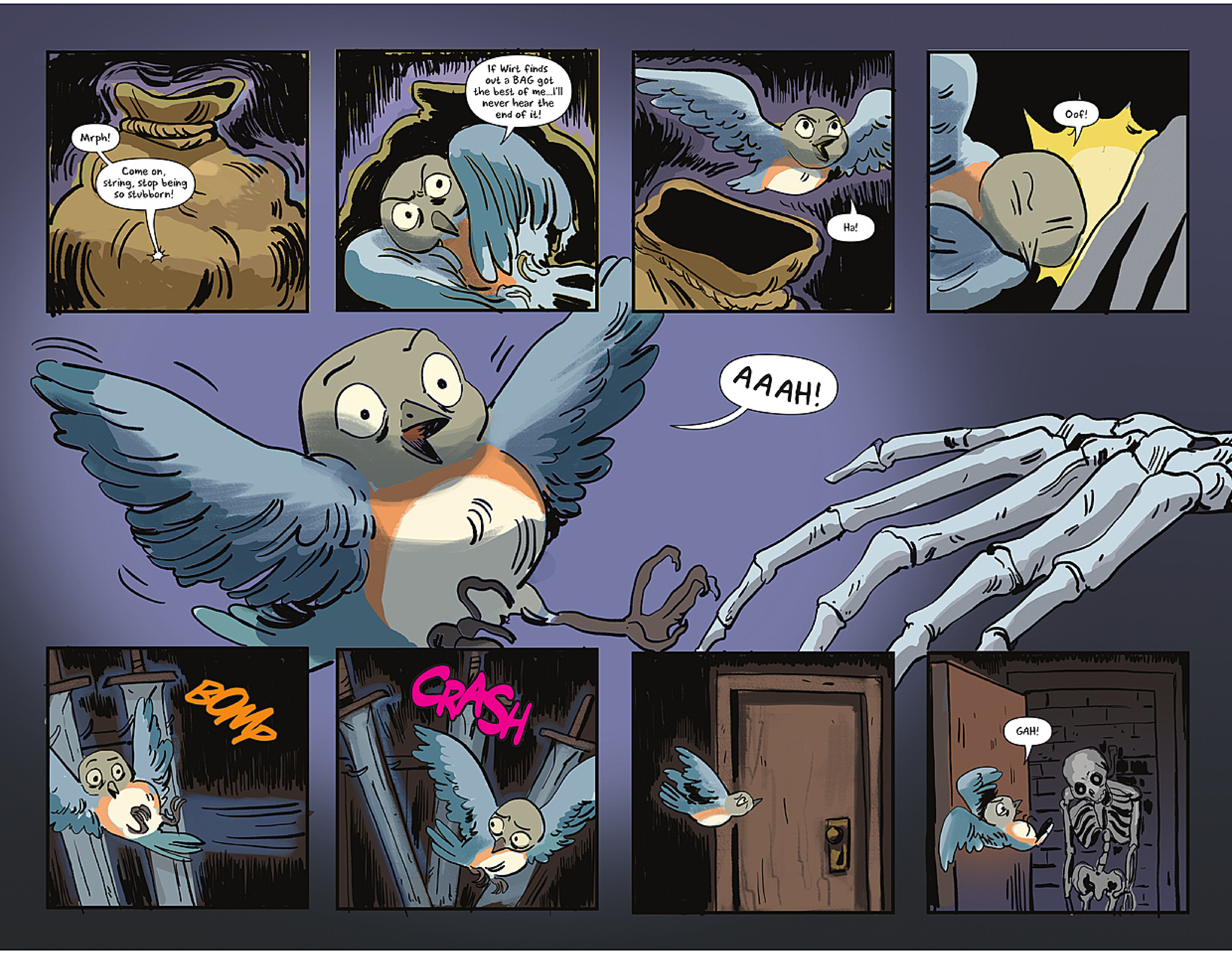


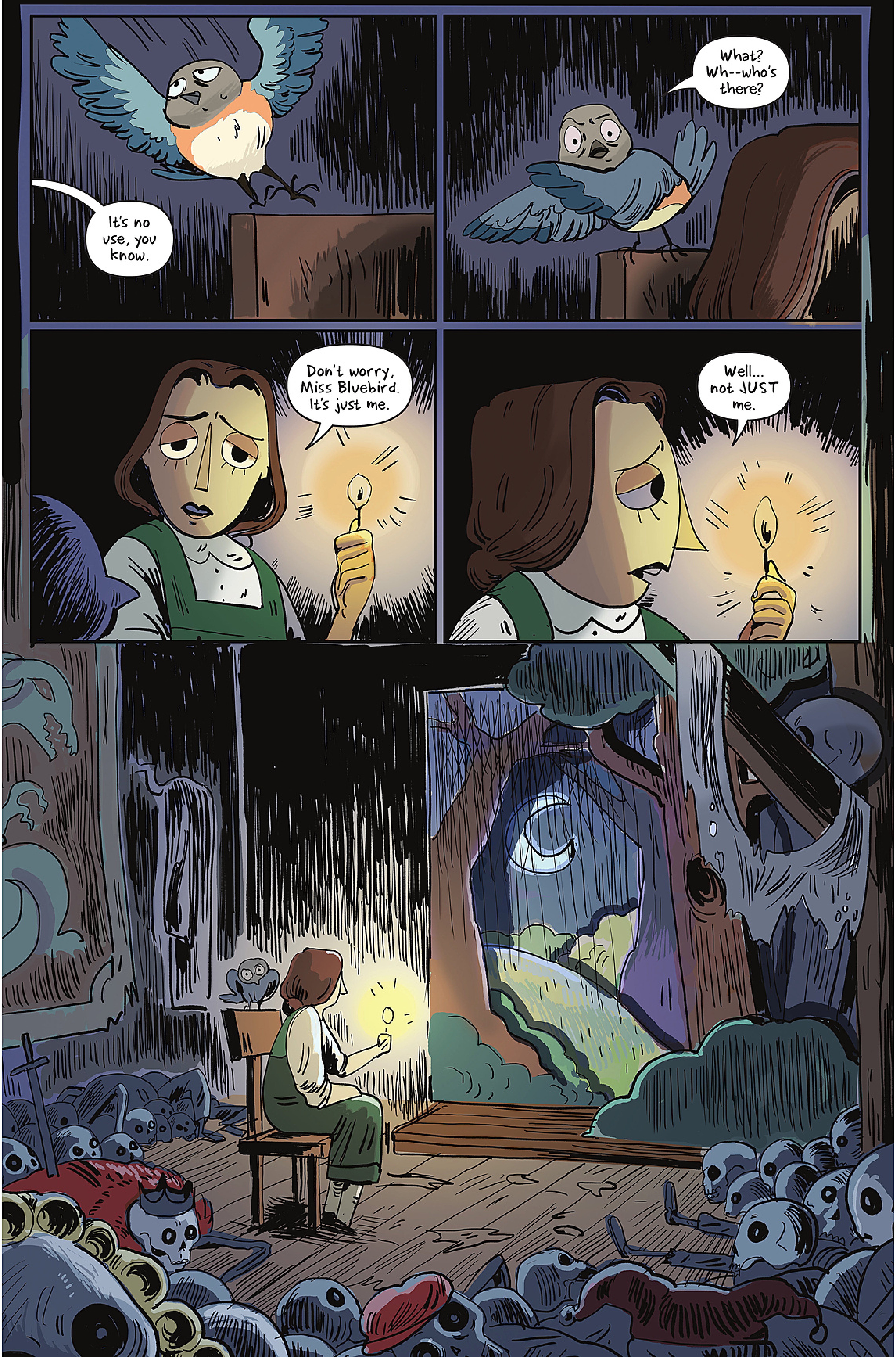
CHAPTER FOUR

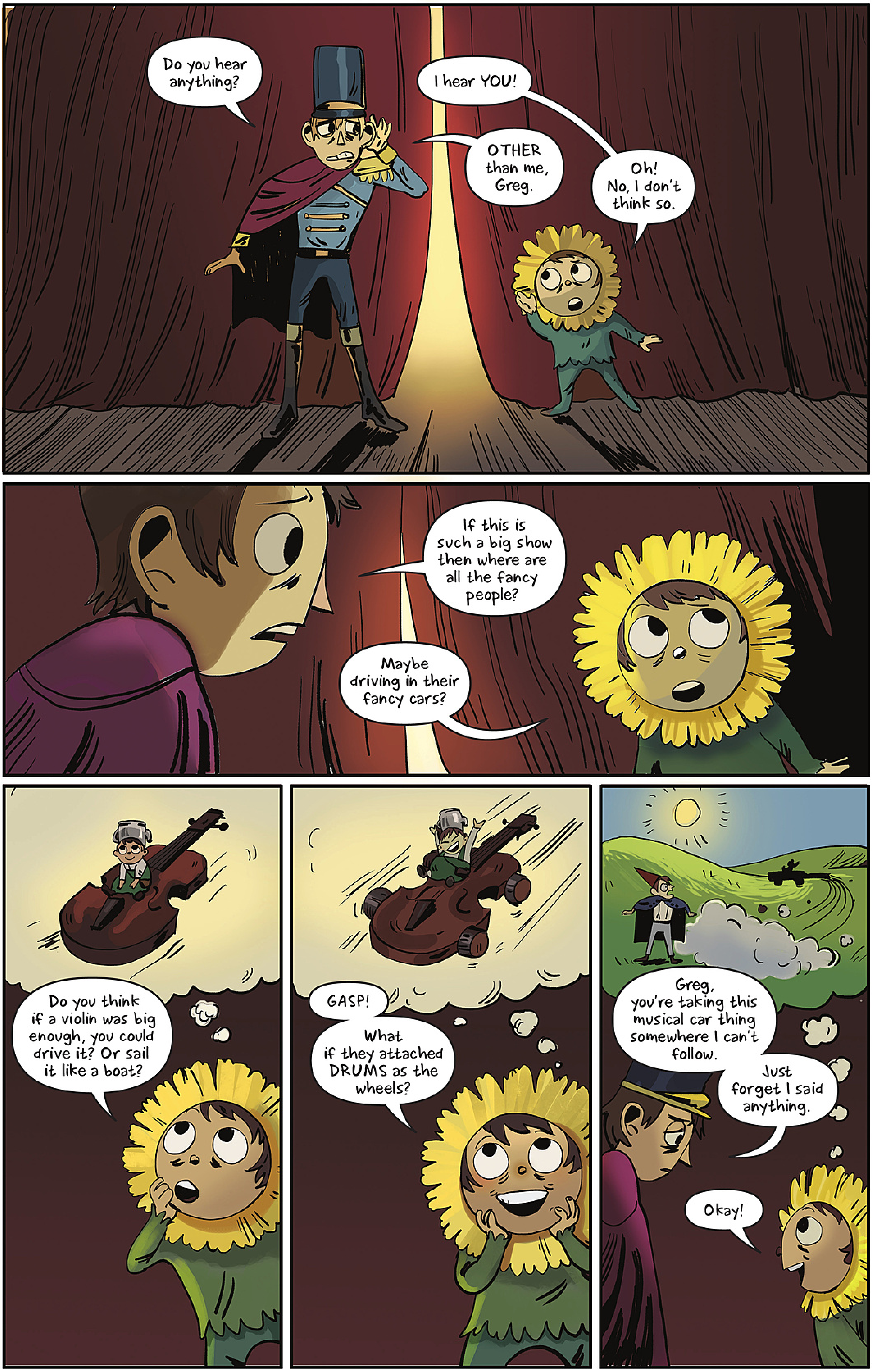

SHHK
Rise and shine!
It's thirty minutes to curtain!
How are our two best actors feeling?
Ughhh...
EXCELLENT.

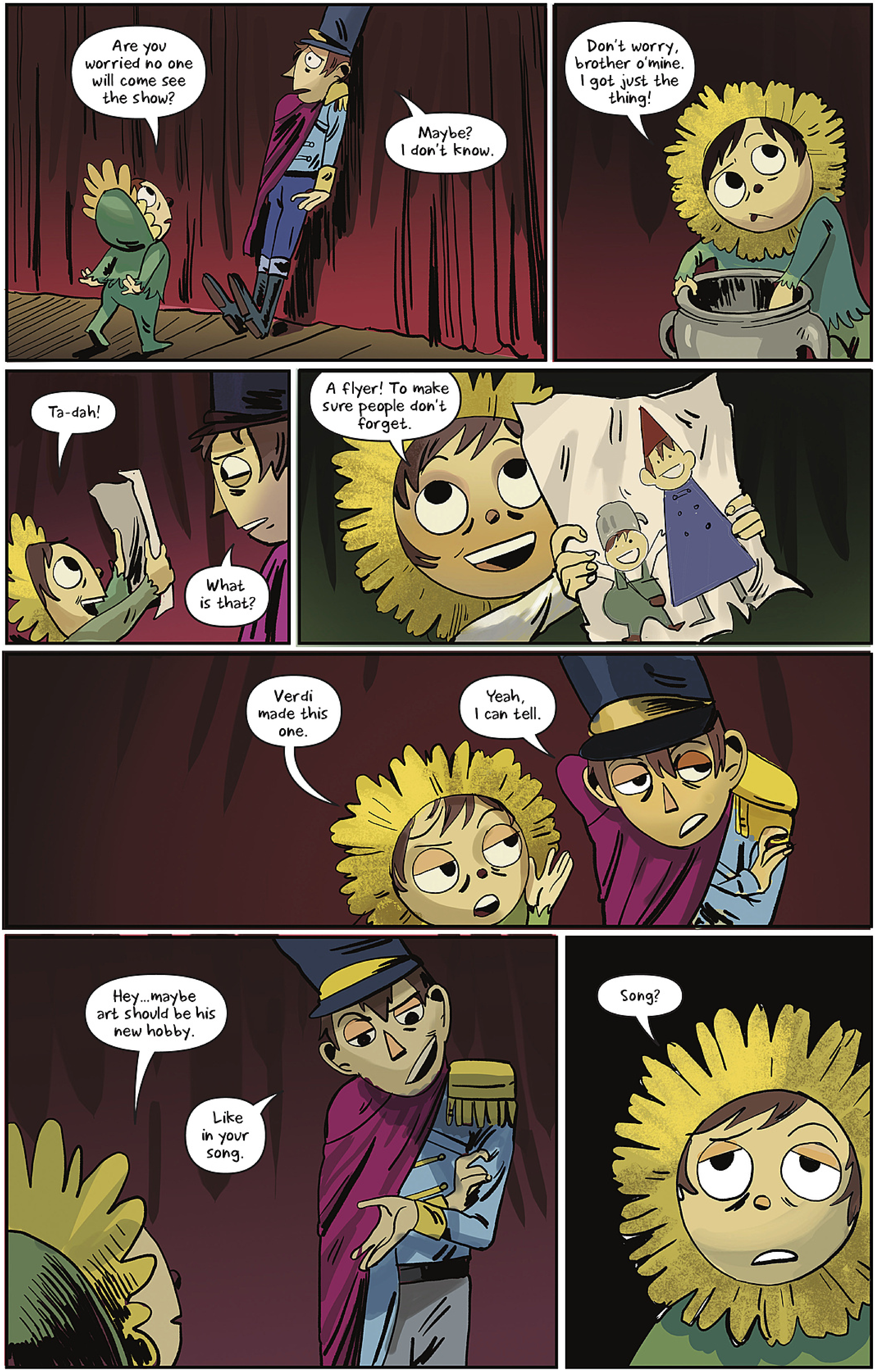

Come now, boys, don't delay! That's no way to greet today!
Beckoning you to the stage, we sing the theater's serenade.
It's opening night. Don't be afraid...
Is this where you say break a leg?
You're very clever, Gregory. Indeed, it is.
I knew that, too.
Of course, Wirt!
We'd expect nothing less from our star.

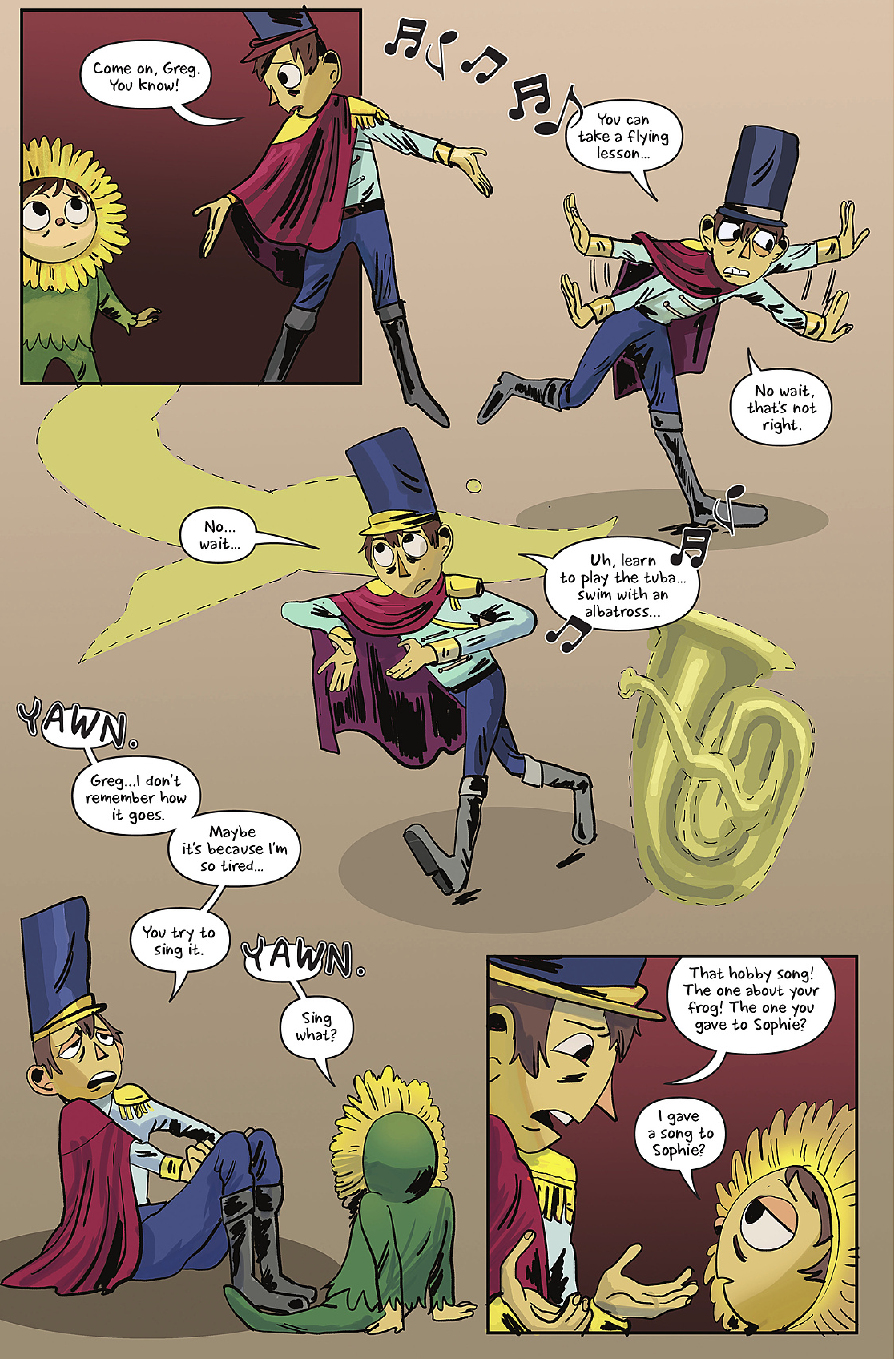

Now here comes the fun part.
COSTUMES!
What do you think? Aren't they just dashing?
Daring!
Bold!
You'll want to spend an eternity in them, I guarantee!
Wow, that's a lot of commitment.
Now, don't forget that curtain's in thirty minutes.
We're counting on you two to really give it your all today!
Don't disappoint us.
SHUNK!

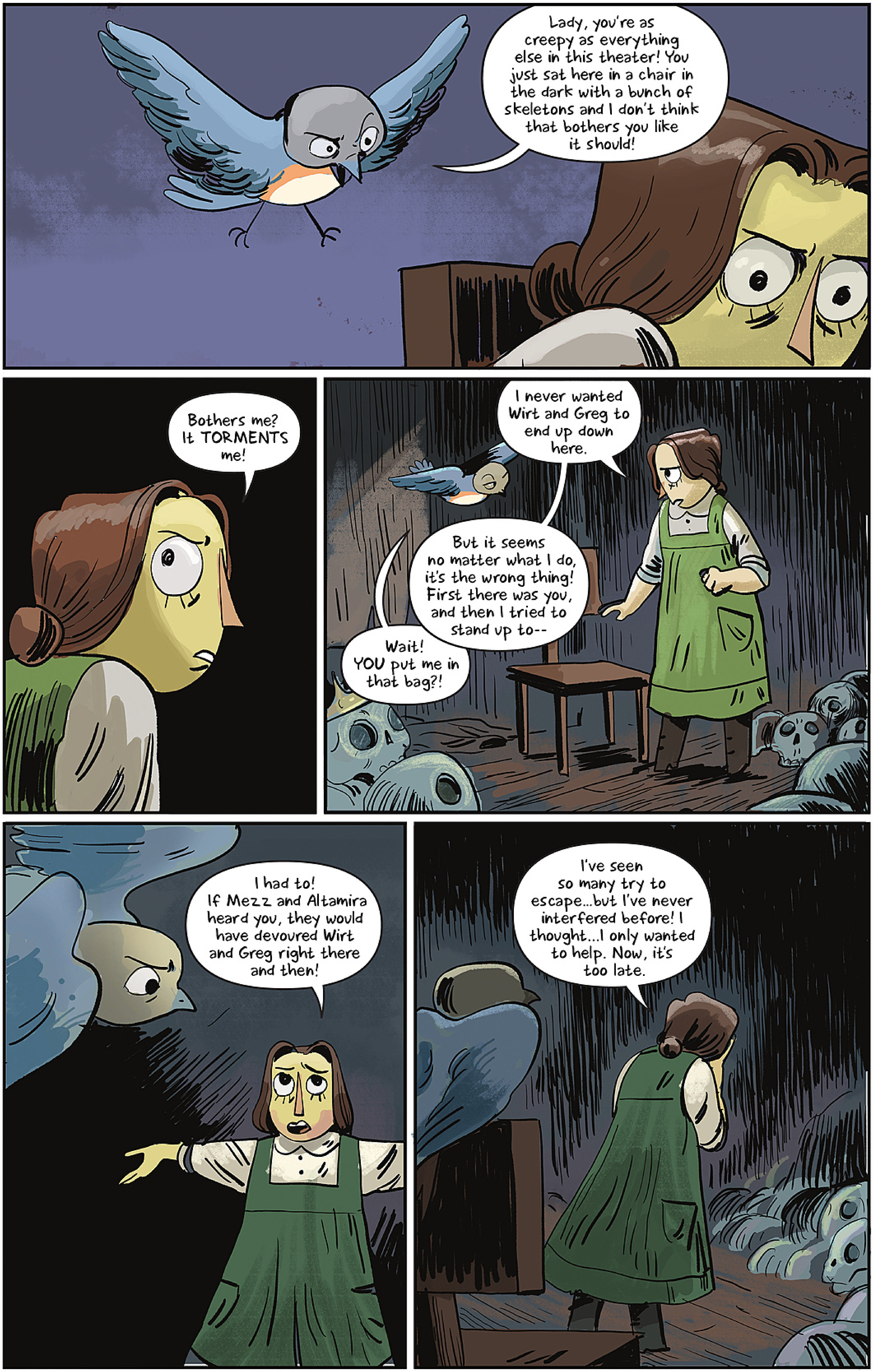

Mrph!
Come on, string, stop being so stubborn!
If Wirt finds out a BAG got the best of me...I'll never hear the end of it!
Ha!
Oof!
AAAH!
BOMP
CRASH
GAH!

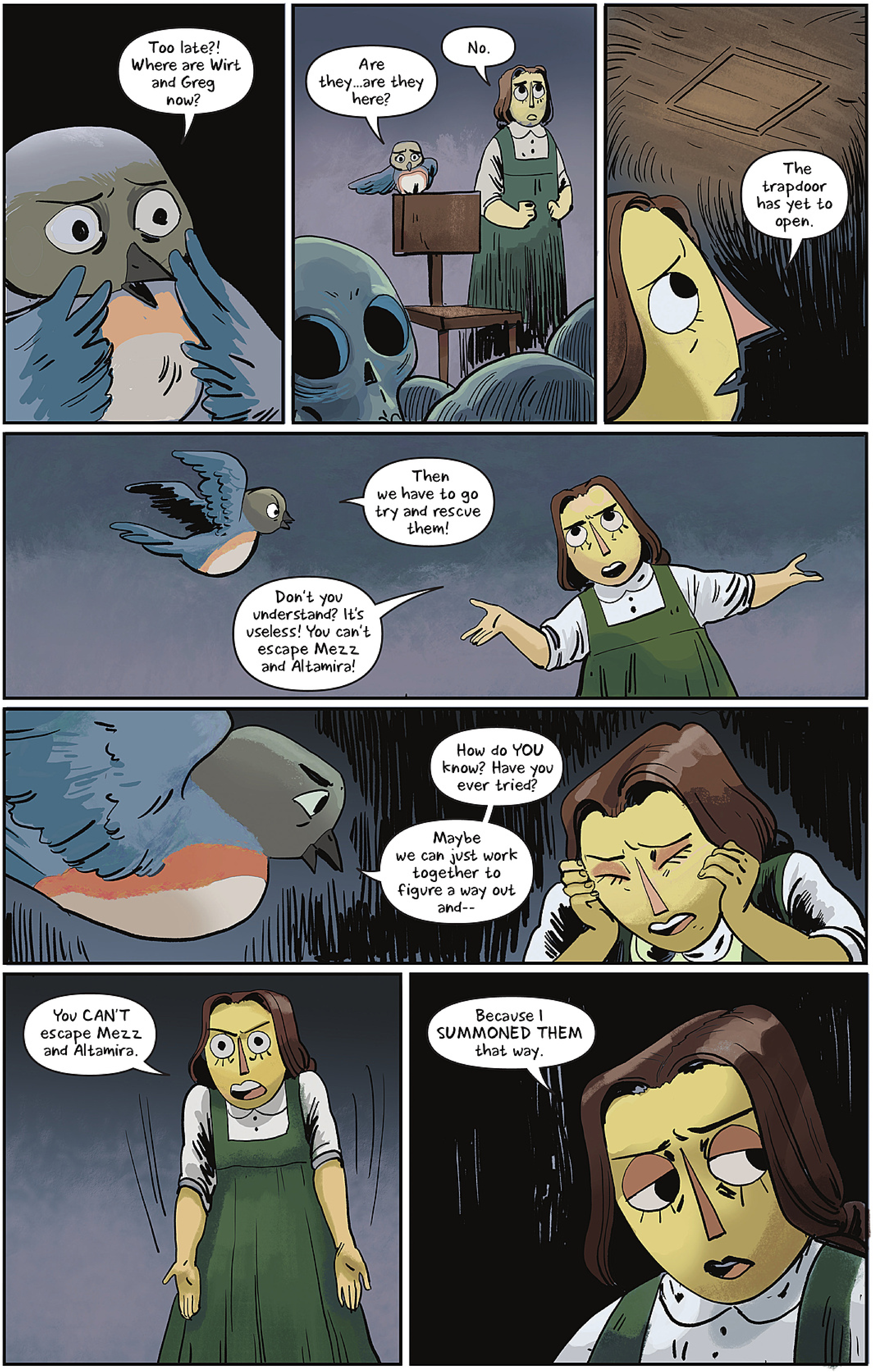

It's no use, you know.
What? Wh--who's there?
Don't worry, Miss Bluebird. It's just me.
Well... not JUST me.

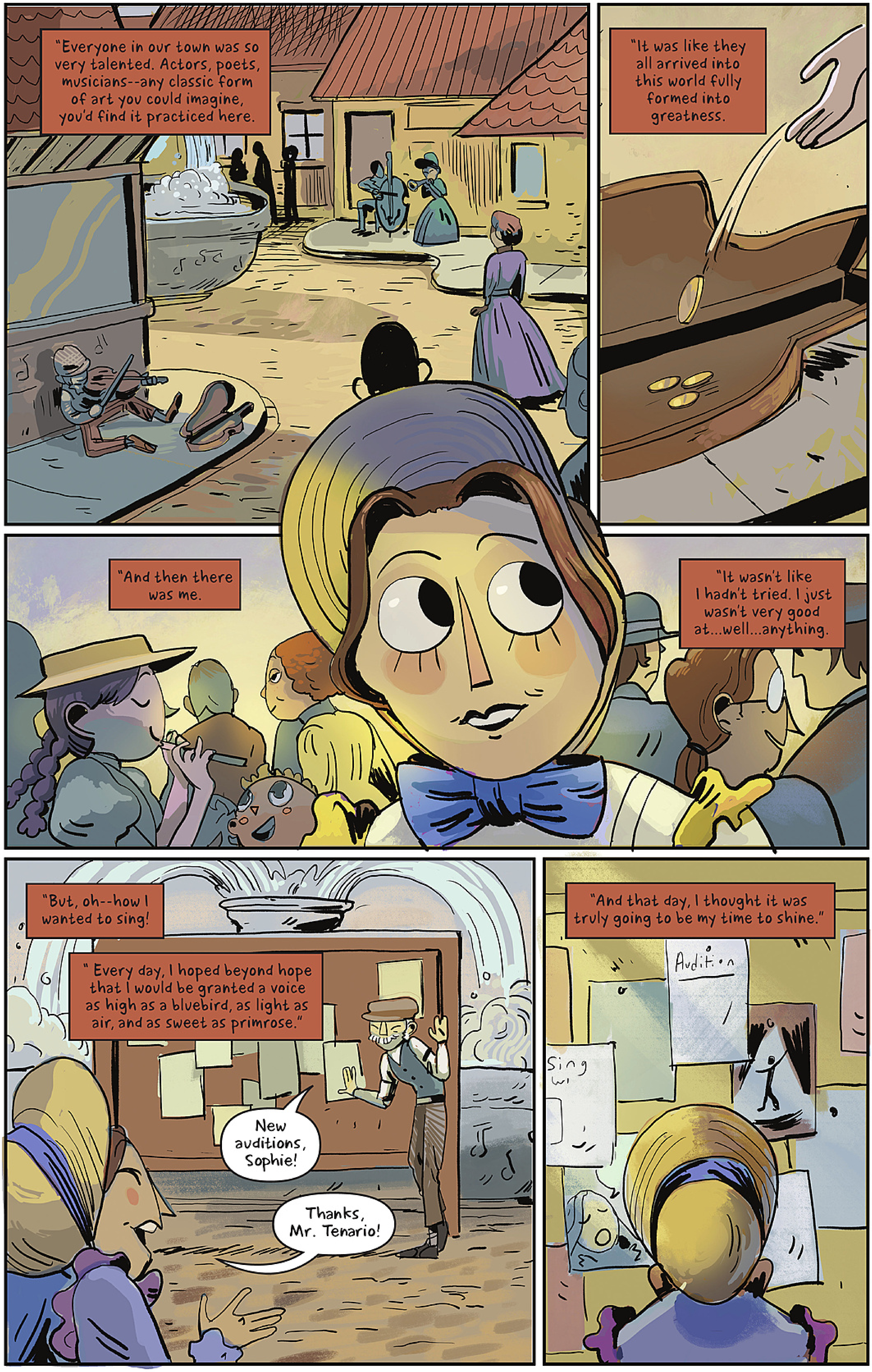

Do you hear anything?
I hear YOU!
OTHER than me, Greg.
Oh! No, I don't think so.
If this is such a big show then where are all the fancy people?
Maybe driving in their fancy cars?
Do you think if a violin was big enough, you could drive it? Or sail it like a boat?
GASP!
What if they attached DRUMS as the wheels?
Greg, you're taking this musical car thing somewhere I can't follow.
Just forget I said anything.
Okay!

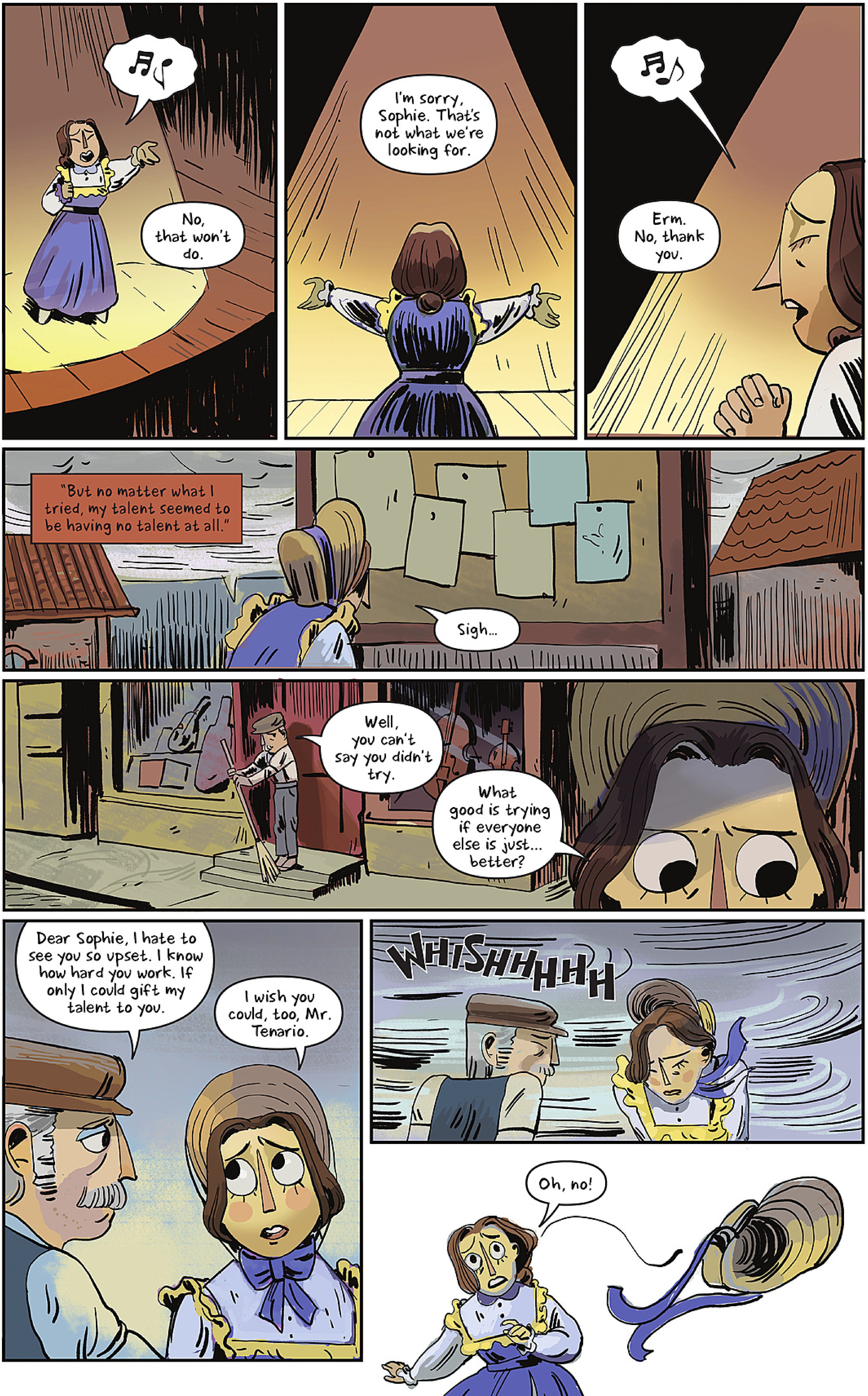

Are you worried no one will come see the show?
Maybe? I don't know.
Don't worry, brother o'mine. I got just the thing!
Ta-dah!
What is that?
A flyer! To make sure people don't forget.
Verdi made this one.
Yeah, I can tell.
Hey...maybe art should be his new hobby.
Like in your song.
Song?

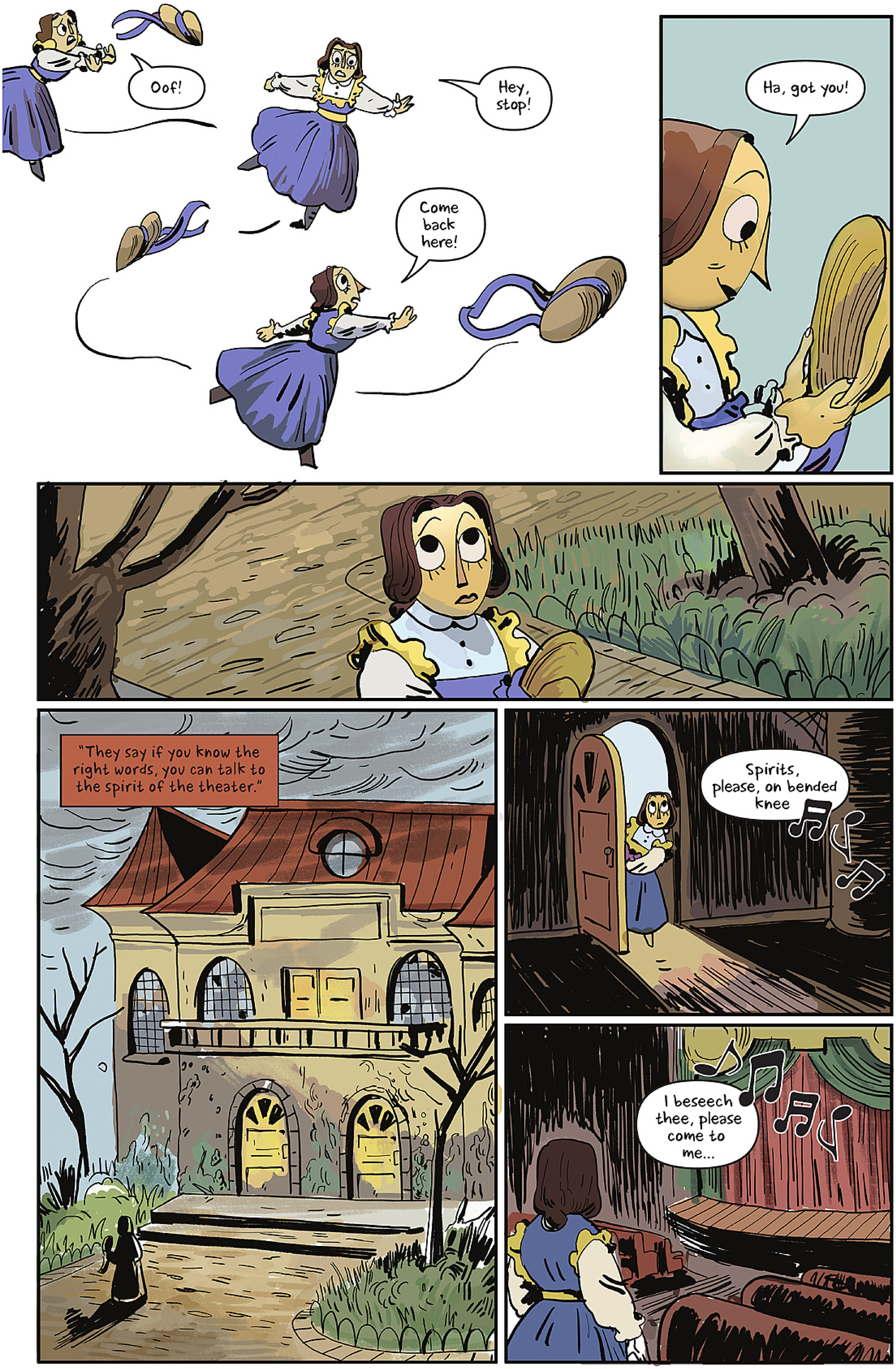

Come on, Greg. You know!
You can take a flying lesson...
No wait, that's not right.
No... wait...
Uh, learn to play the tuba... swim with an albatross...
YAWN.
Greg...I don't remember how it goes.
Maybe it's because I'm so tired...
You try to sing it.
YAWN.
Sing what?
That hobby song! The one about your frog! The one you gave to Sophie?
I gave a song to Sophie?

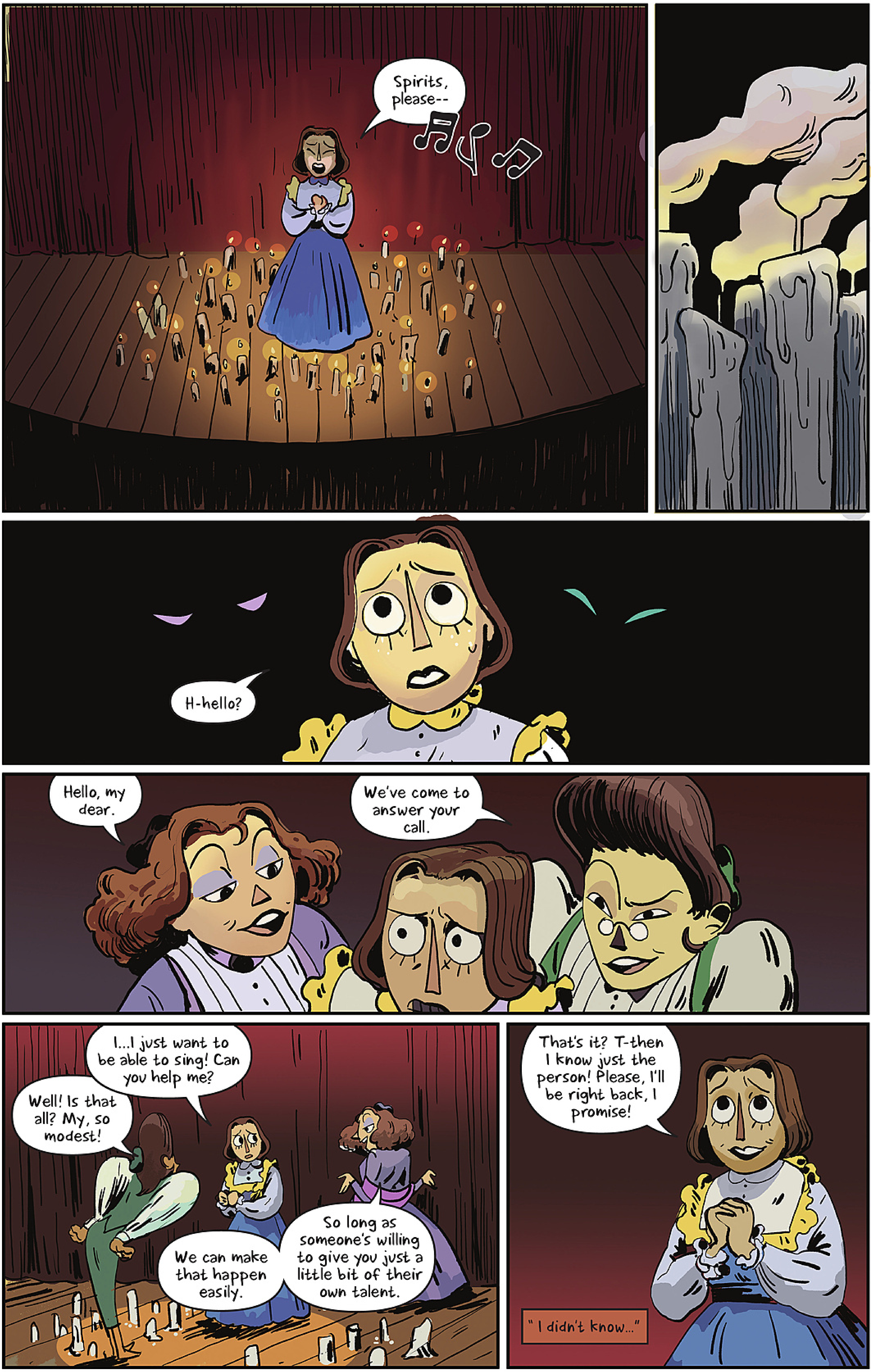

Lady, you're as creepy as everything else in this theater! You just sat here in a chair in the dark with a bunch of skeletons and I don't think that bothers you like it should!
Bothers me? It TORMENTS me!
I never wanted Wirt and Greg to end up down here.
But it seems no matter what I do, it's the wrong thing! First there was you, and then I tried to stand up to--
Wait! YOU put me in that bag?!
I had to! If Mezz and Altamira heard you, they would have devoured Wirt and Greg right there and then!
I've seen so many try to escape...but I've never interfered before! I thought...I only wanted to help. Now, it's too late.

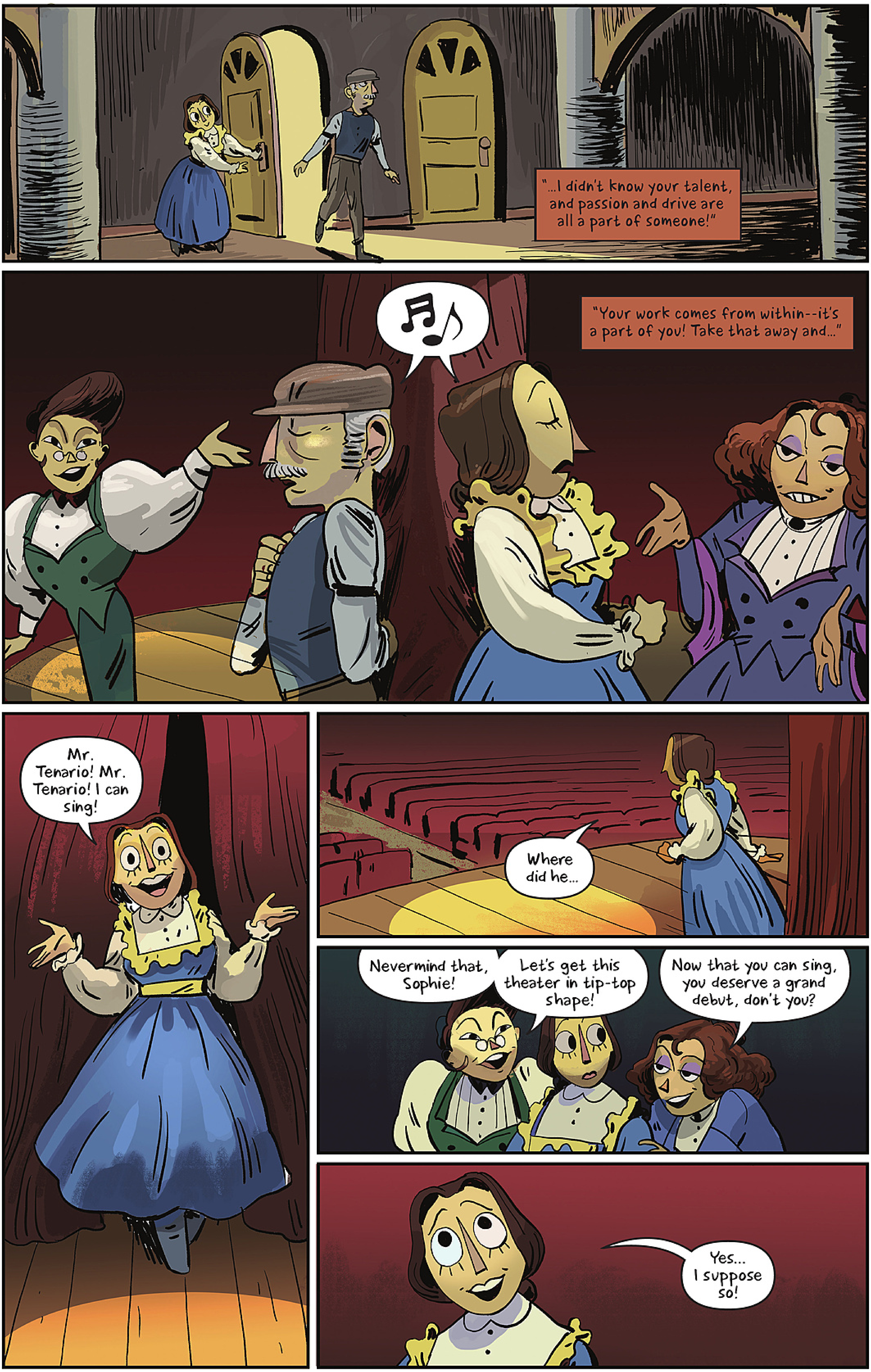

Too late?! Where are Wirt and Greg now?
Are they...are they here?
No.
The trapdoor has yet to open.
Then we have to go try and rescue them!
Don't you understand? It's useless! You can't escape Mezz and Altamira!
How do YOU know? Have you ever tried?
Maybe we can just work together to figure a way out and--
You CAN'T escape Mezz and Altamira.
Because I SUMMONED THEM that way.

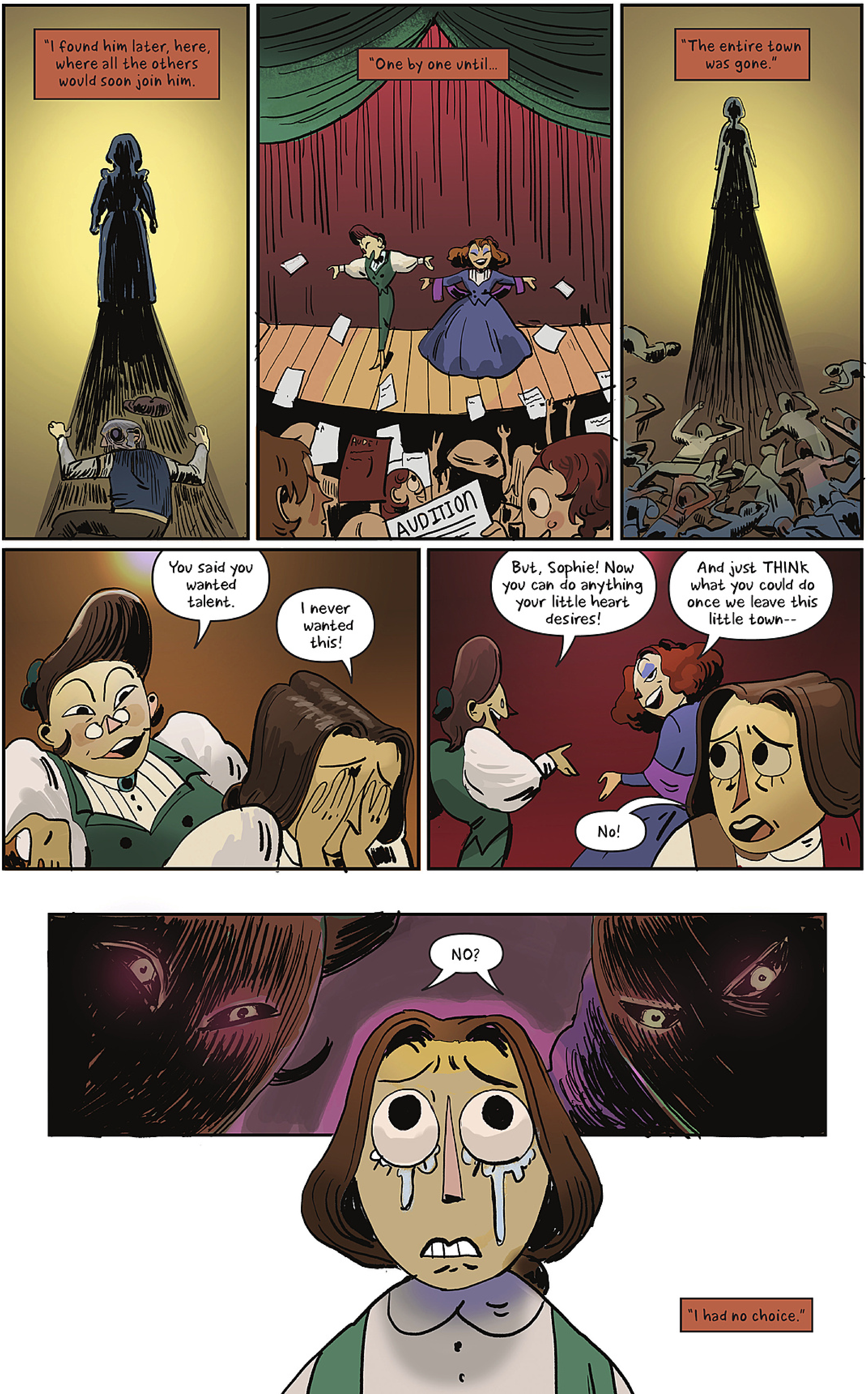

"Everyone in our town was so very talented. Actors, poets, musicians--any classic form of art you could imagine, you'd find it practiced here.
"It was like they all arrived into this world fully formed into greatness.
"And then there was me.
"It wasn't like I hadn't tried. I just wasn't very good at...well...anything.
"But, oh--how I wanted to sing!
" Every day, I hoped beyond hope that I would be granted a voice as high as a bluebird, as light as air, and as sweet as primrose."
New auditions, Sophie!
Thanks, Mr. Tenario!
"And that day, I thought it was truly going to be my time to shine."
Audition
Sing wi

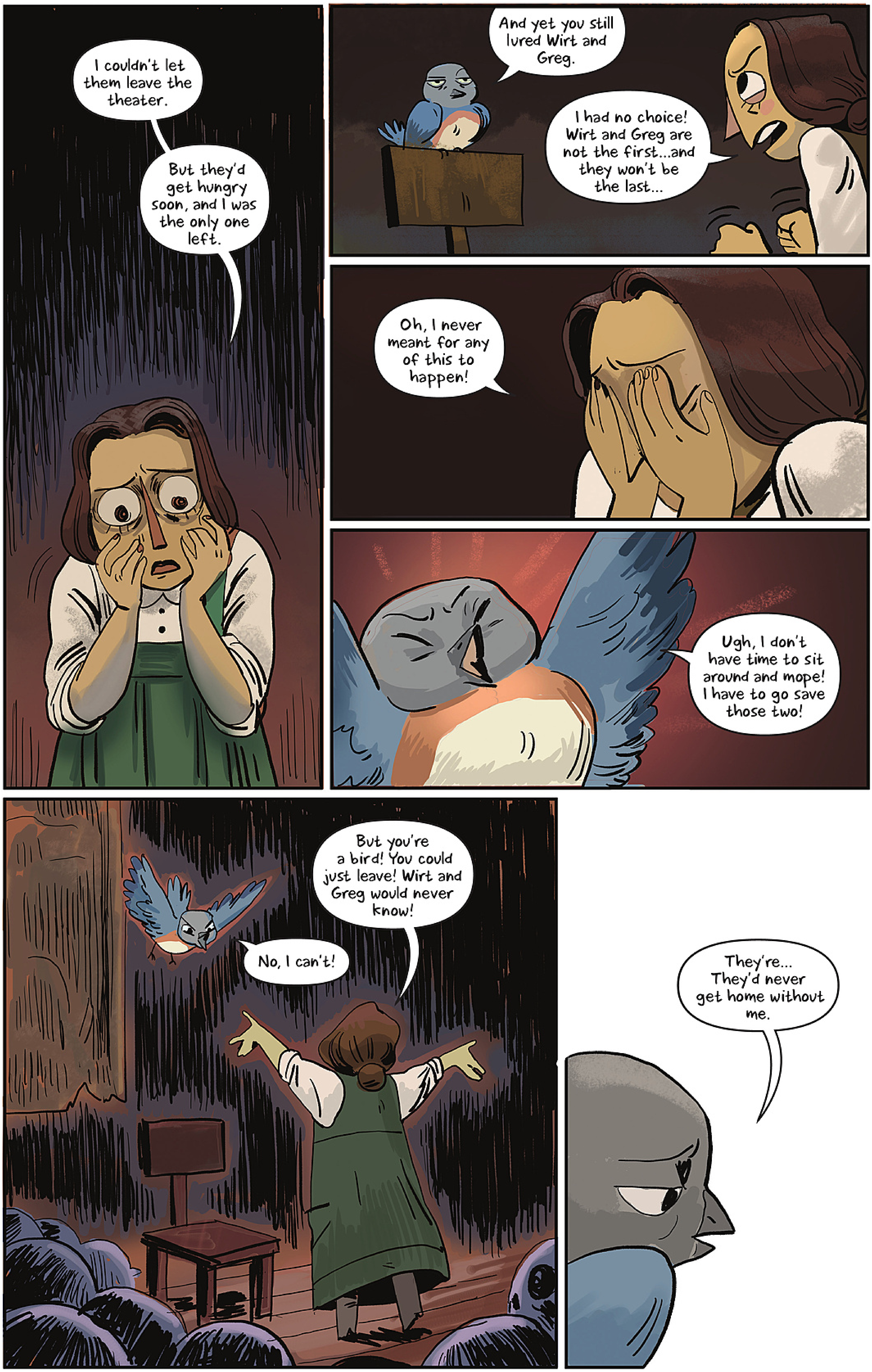

♬♪
No, that won't do.
I'm sorry, Sophie. That's not what we're looking for.
♬♪
Erm. No, thank you.
"But no matter what I tried, my talent seemed to be having no talent at all."
Sigh...
Well, you can't say you didn't try.
What good is trying if everyone else is just... better?
Dear Sophie, I hate to see you so upset. I know how hard you work. If only I could gift my talent to you.
I wish you could, too, Mr. Tenario.
WHISHHHHHH
Oh, no!

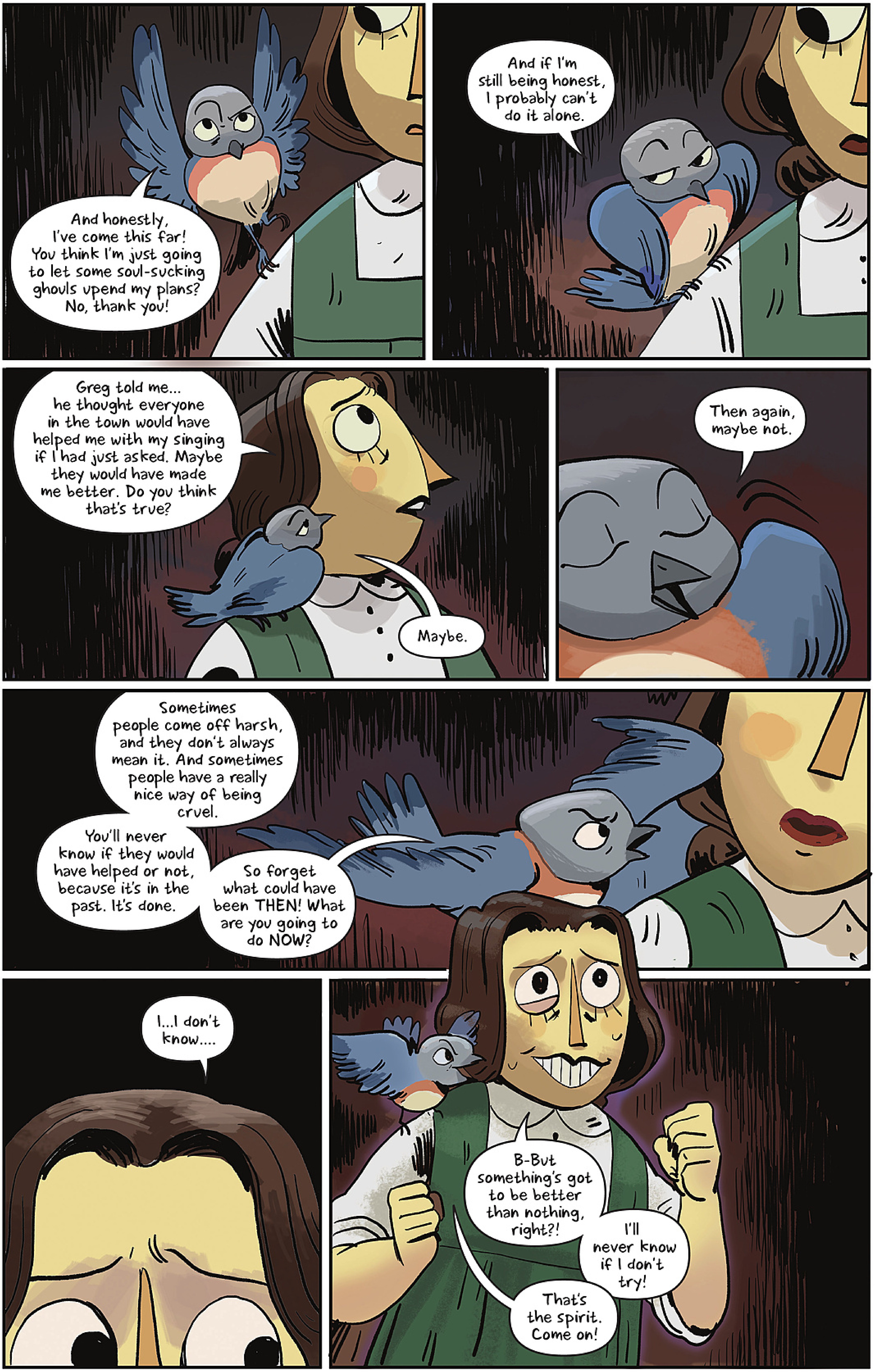

Oof!
Hey, stop!
Come back here!
Ha, got you!
"They say if you know the right words, you can talk to the spirit of the theater."
Spirits, please, on bended knee
I beseech thee, please come to me...

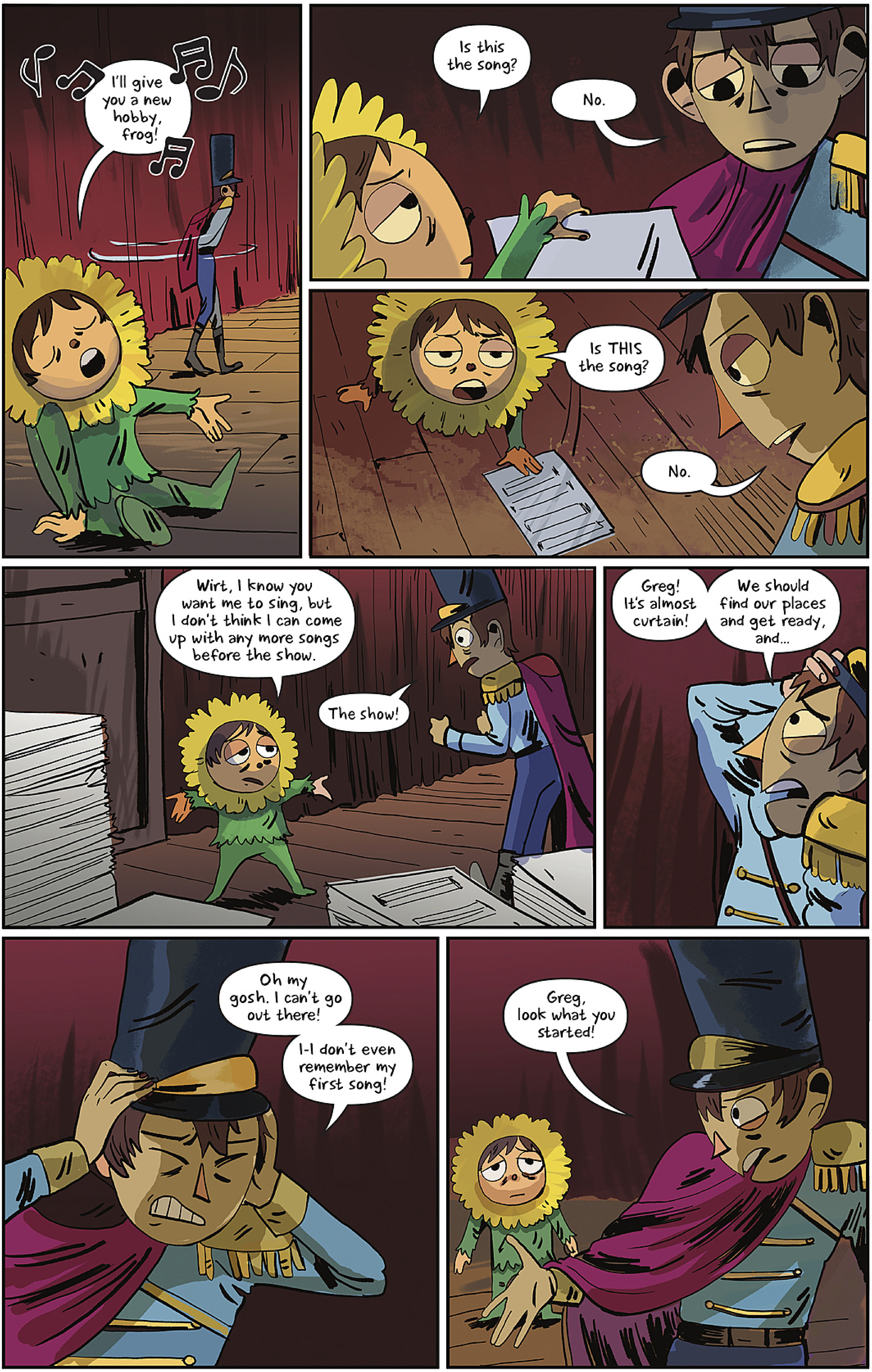

Spirits, please--
H-hello?
Hello, my dear.
We've come to answer your call.
I...I just want to be able to sing! Can you help me?
Well! Is that all? My, so modest!
We can make that happen easily.
So long as someone's willing to give you just a little bit of their own talent.
That's it? T-then I know just the person! Please, I'll be right back, I promise!
"I didn't know..."

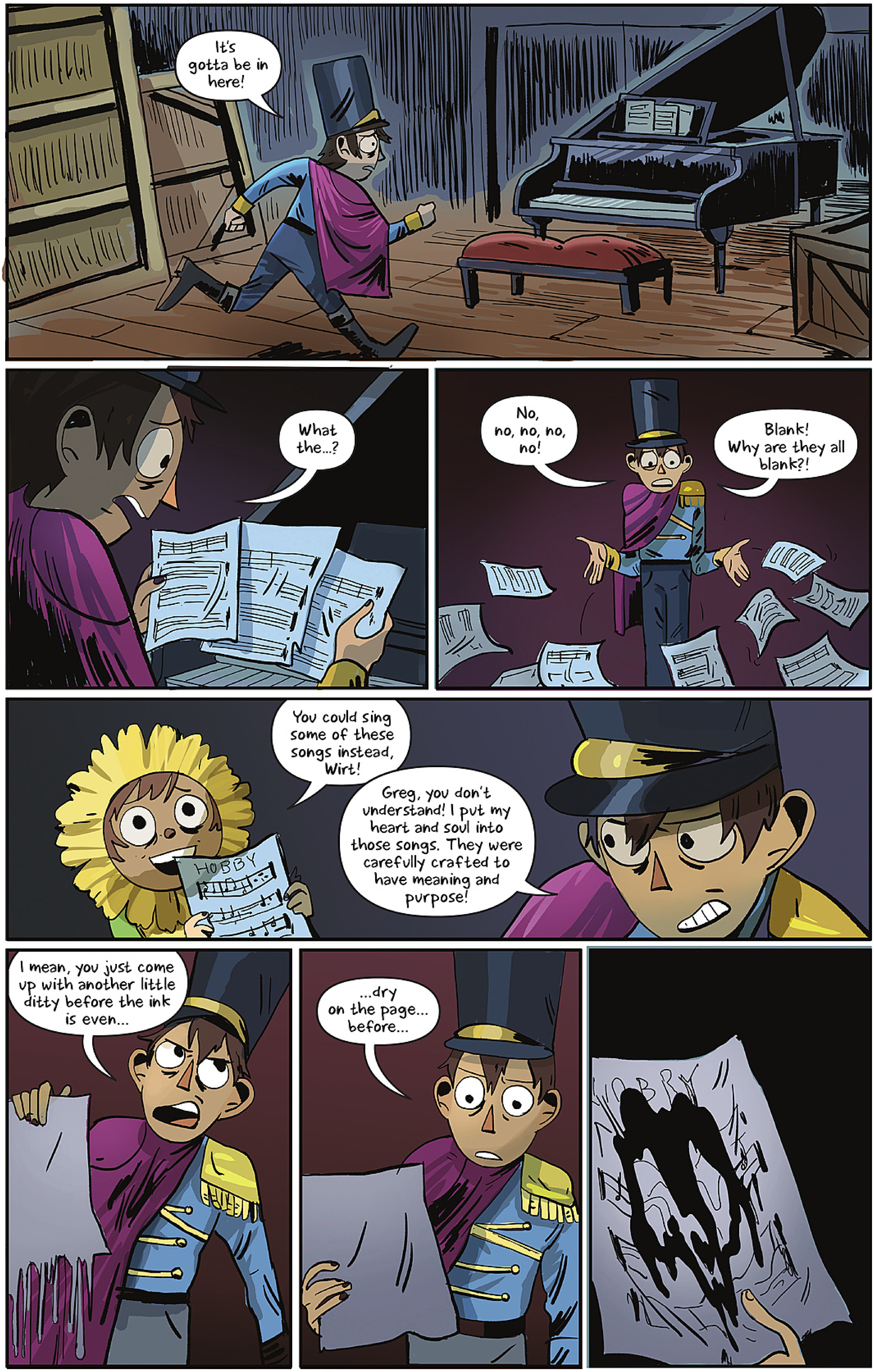

"...I didn't know your talent, and passion and drive are all a part of someone!"
"Your work comes from within--it's a part of you! Take that away and..."
♬♪
Mr. Tenario! Mr. Tenario! I can sing!
Where did he...
Nevermind that, Sophie!
Let's get this theater in tip-top shape!
Now that you can sing, you deserve a grand debut, don't you?
Yes... I suppose so!

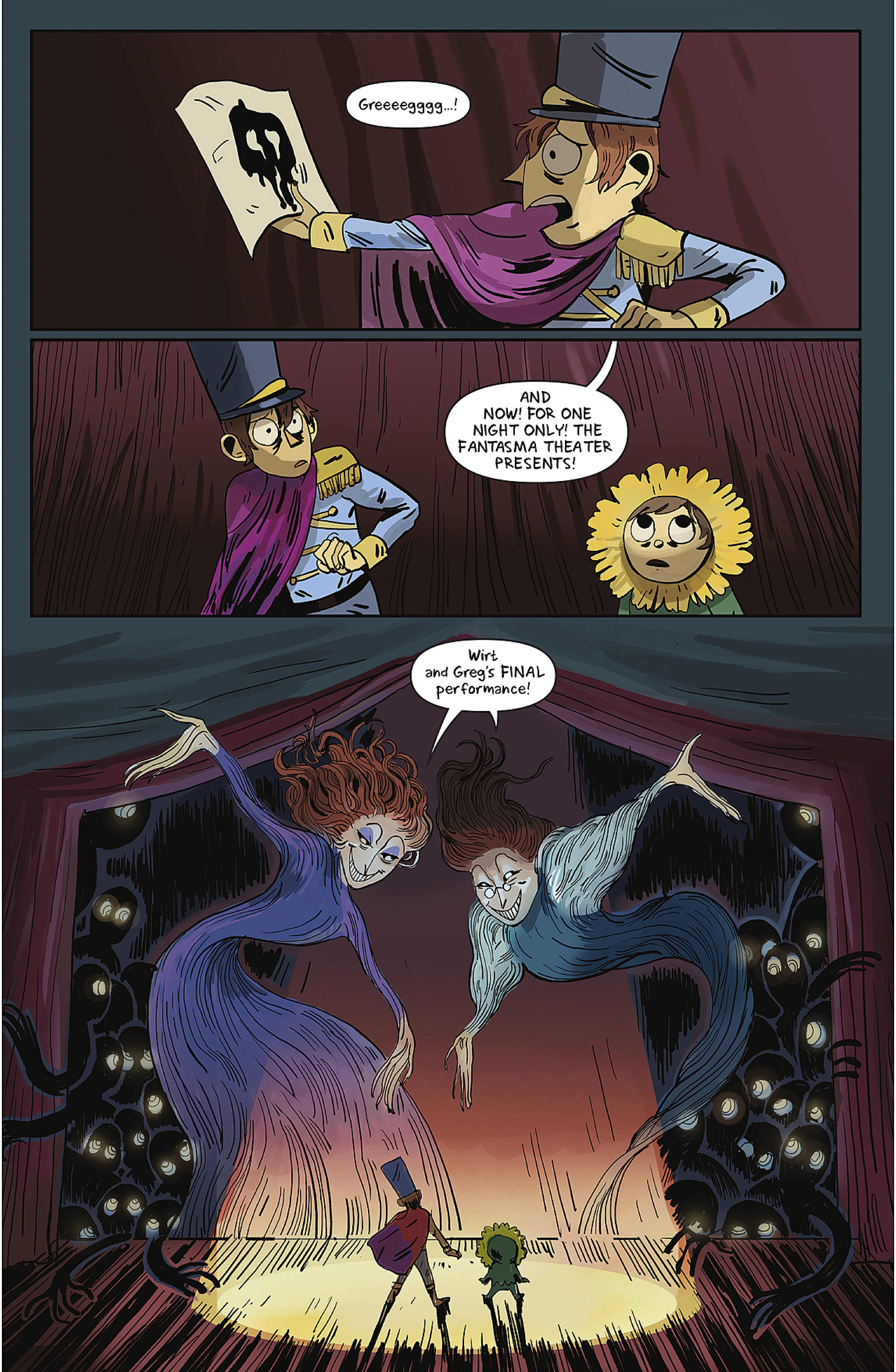

"I found him later, here, where all the others would soon join him.
"One by one until...
AUDITION
"The entire town was gone."
You said you wanted talent.
I never wanted this!
But, Sophie! Now you can do anything your little heart desires!
And just THINK what you could do once we leave this little town--
No!
NO?
"I had no choice."

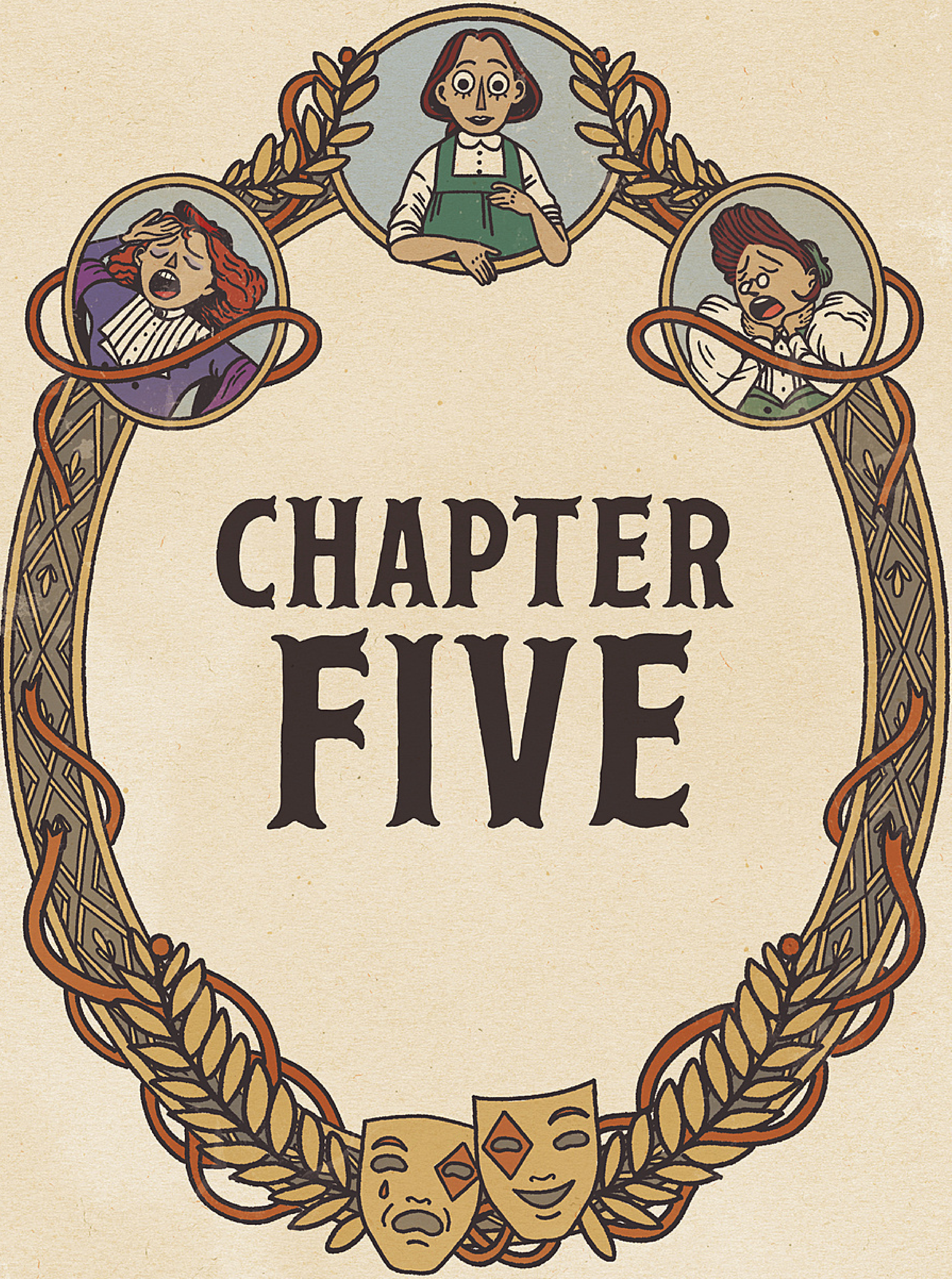

I couldn't let them leave the theater.
But they'd get hungry soon, and I was the only one left.
And yet you still lured Wirt and Greg.
I had no choice! Wirt and Greg are not the first...and they won't be the last...
Oh, I never meant for any of this to happen!
Ugh, I don't have time to sit around and mope! I have to go save those two!
But you're a bird! You could just leave! Wirt and Greg would never know!
No, I can't!
They're... They'd never get home without me.


And honestly, I've come this far! You think I'm just going to let some soul-sucking ghouls upend my plans? No, thank you!
And if I'm still being honest, I probably can't do it alone.
Greg told me... he thought everyone in the town would have helped me with my singing if I had just asked. Maybe they would have made me better. Do you think that's true?
Maybe.
Then again, maybe not.
Sometimes people come off harsh, and they don't always mean it. And sometimes people have a really nice way of being cruel.
You'll never know if they would have helped or not, because it's in the past. It's done.
So forget what could have been THEN! What are you going to do NOW?
I...I don't know....
B-But something's got to be better than nothing, right?!
I'll never know if I don't try!
That's the spirit. Come on!

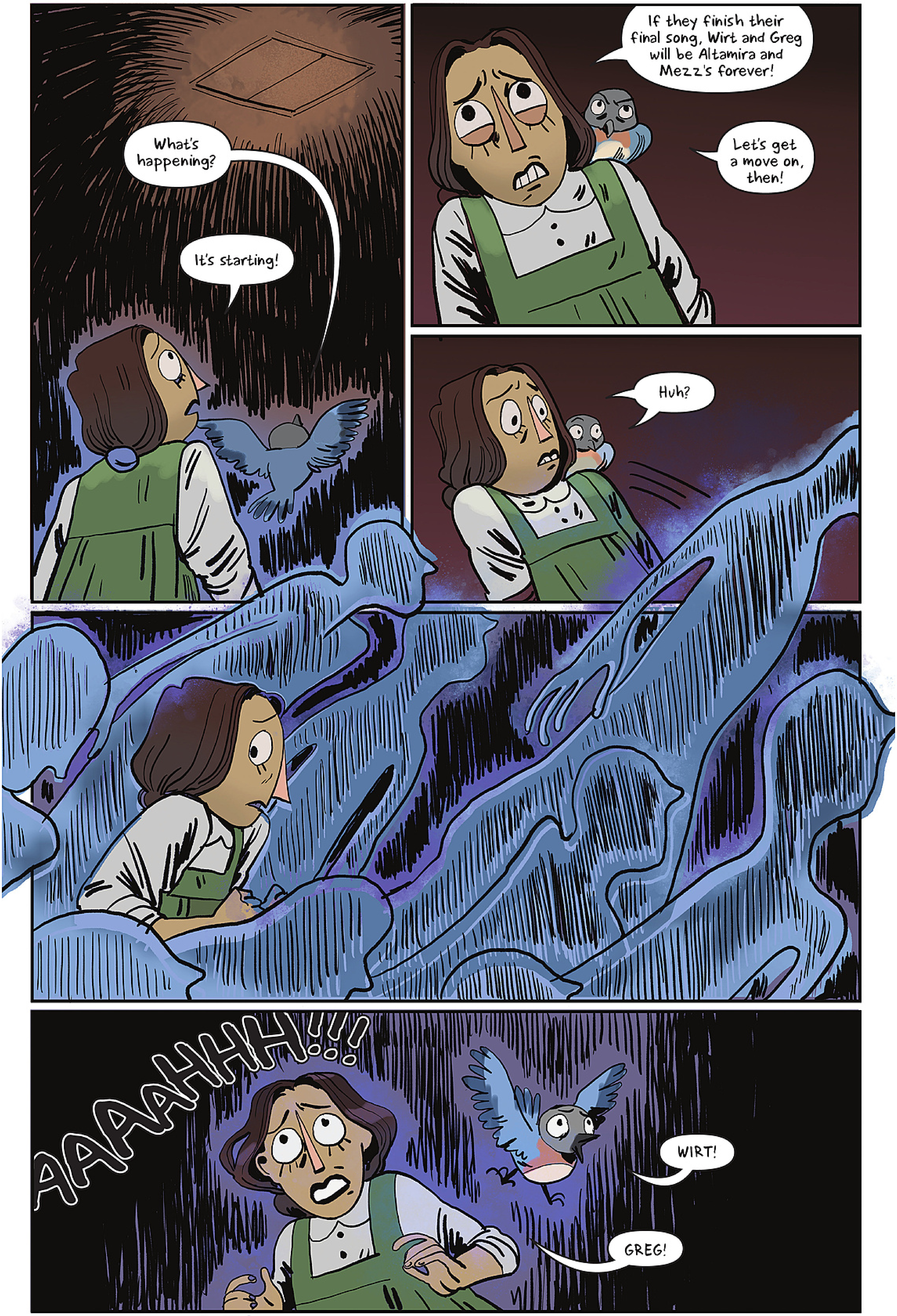

I'll give you a new hobby, frog!
Is this the song?
No.
Is THIS the song?
No.
Wirt, I know you want me to sing, but I don't think I can come up with any more songs before the show.
The show!
Greg! It's almost curtain!
We should find our places and get ready, and...
Oh my gosh. I can't go out there!
I-I don't even remember my first song!
Greg, look what you started!

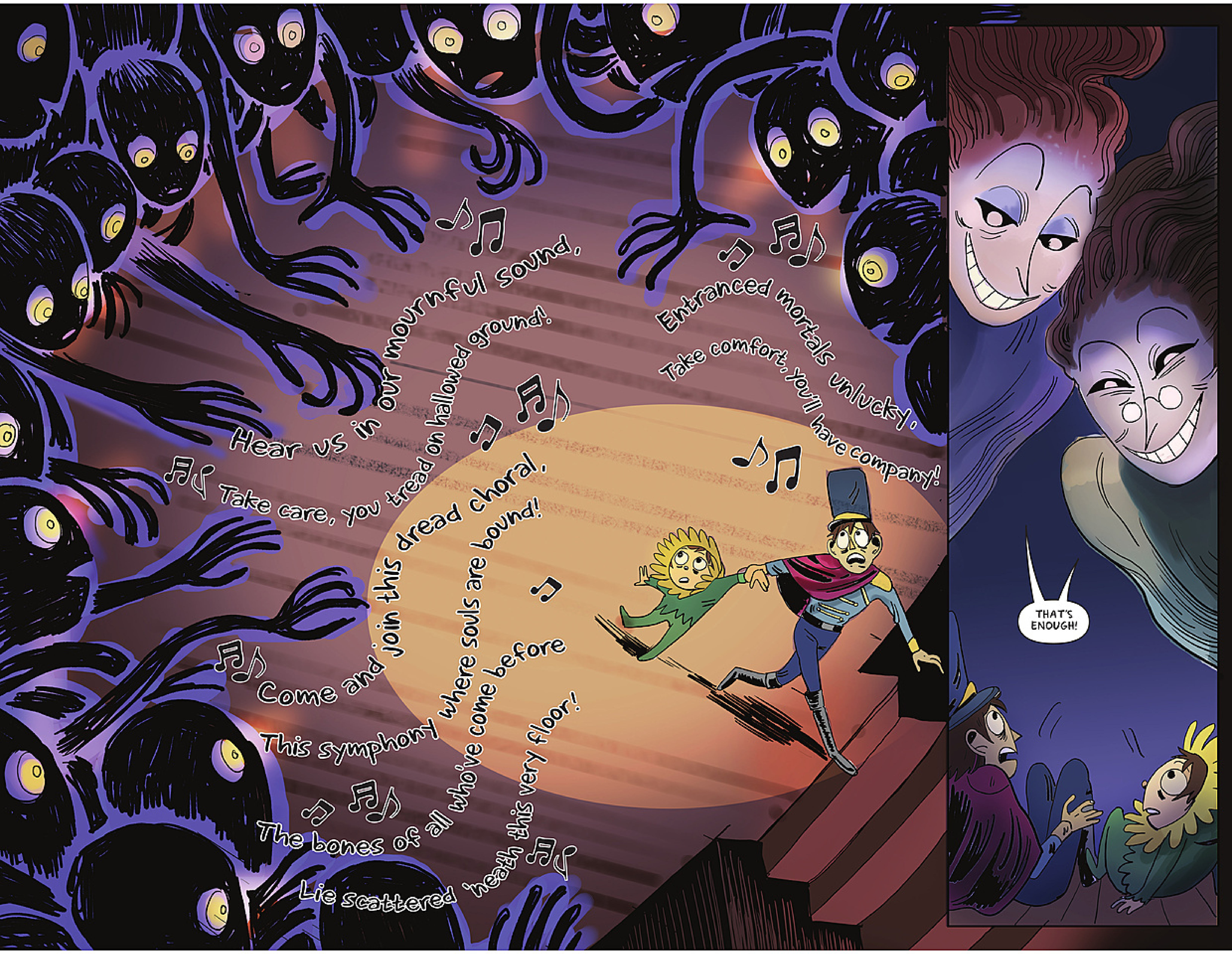

It's gotta be in here!
What the...?
No, no, no, no!
Blank! Why are they all blank?!
You could sing some of these songs instead, Wirt!
HOBBY
Greg, you don't understand! I put my heart and soul into those songs. They were carefully crafted to have meaning and purpose!
I mean, you just come up with another little ditty before the ink is even...
...dry on the page... before...

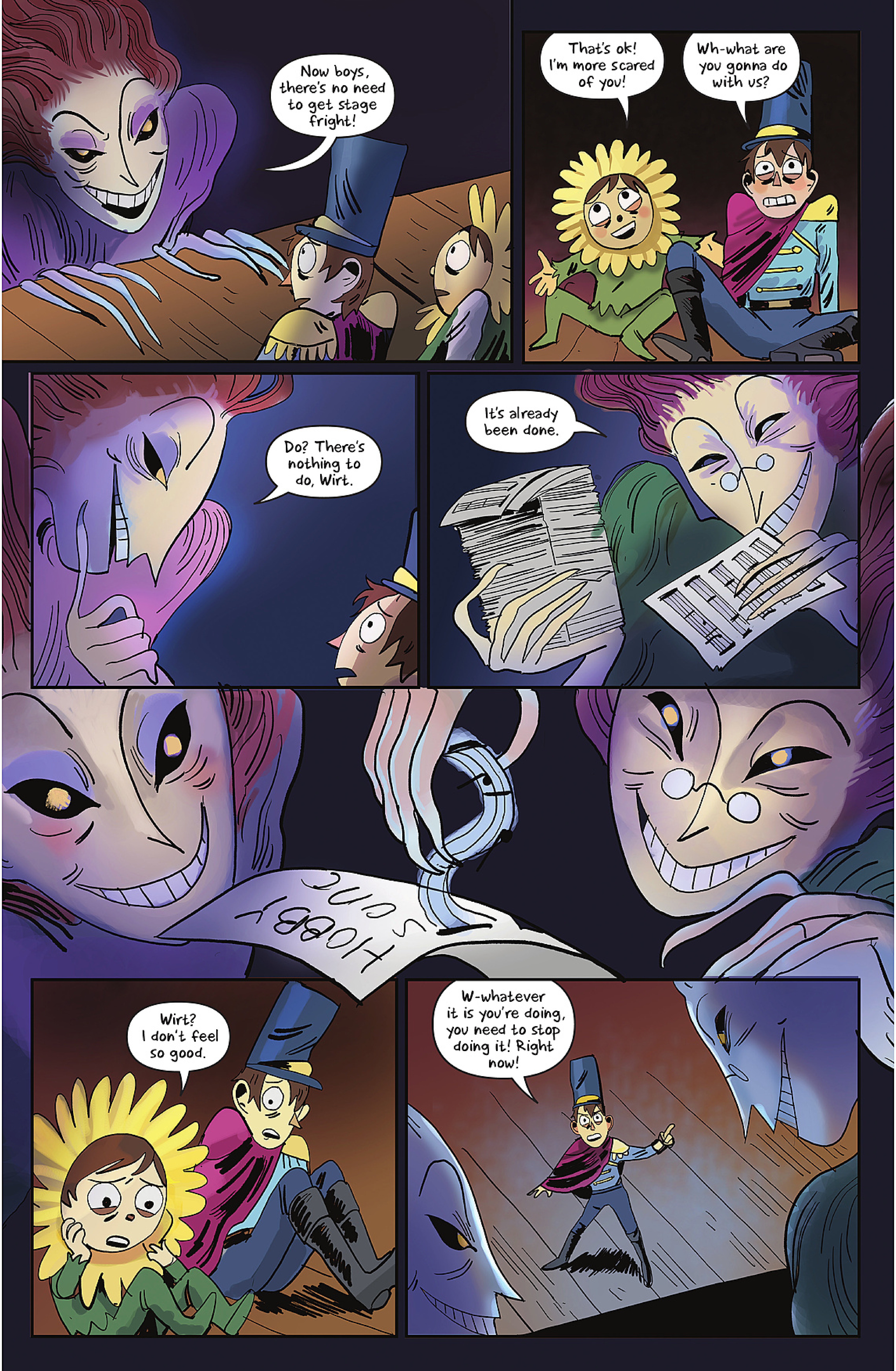

Greeeegggg...!
AND NOW! FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY! THE FANTASMA THEATER PRESENTS!
Wirt and Greg's FINAL performance!

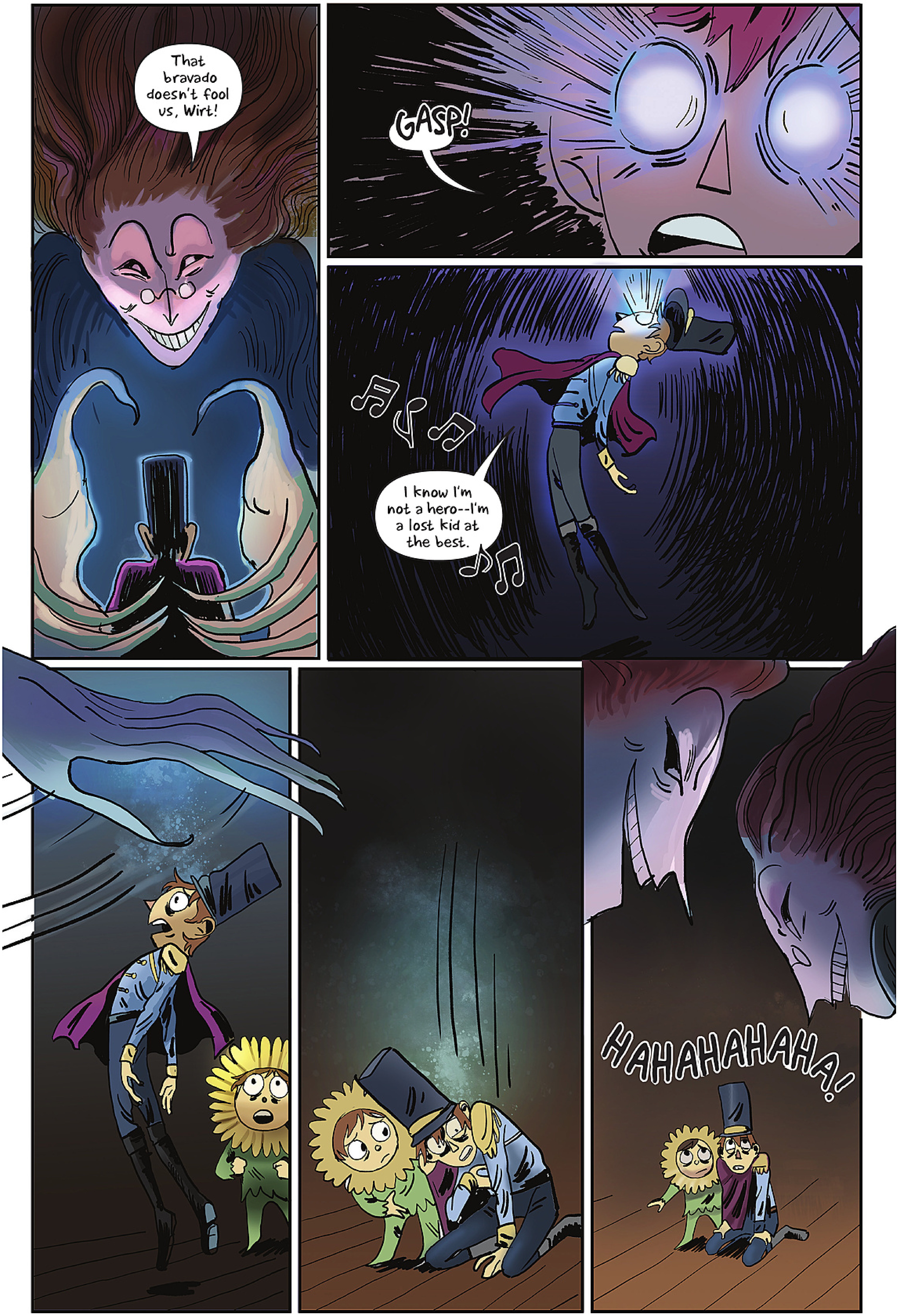


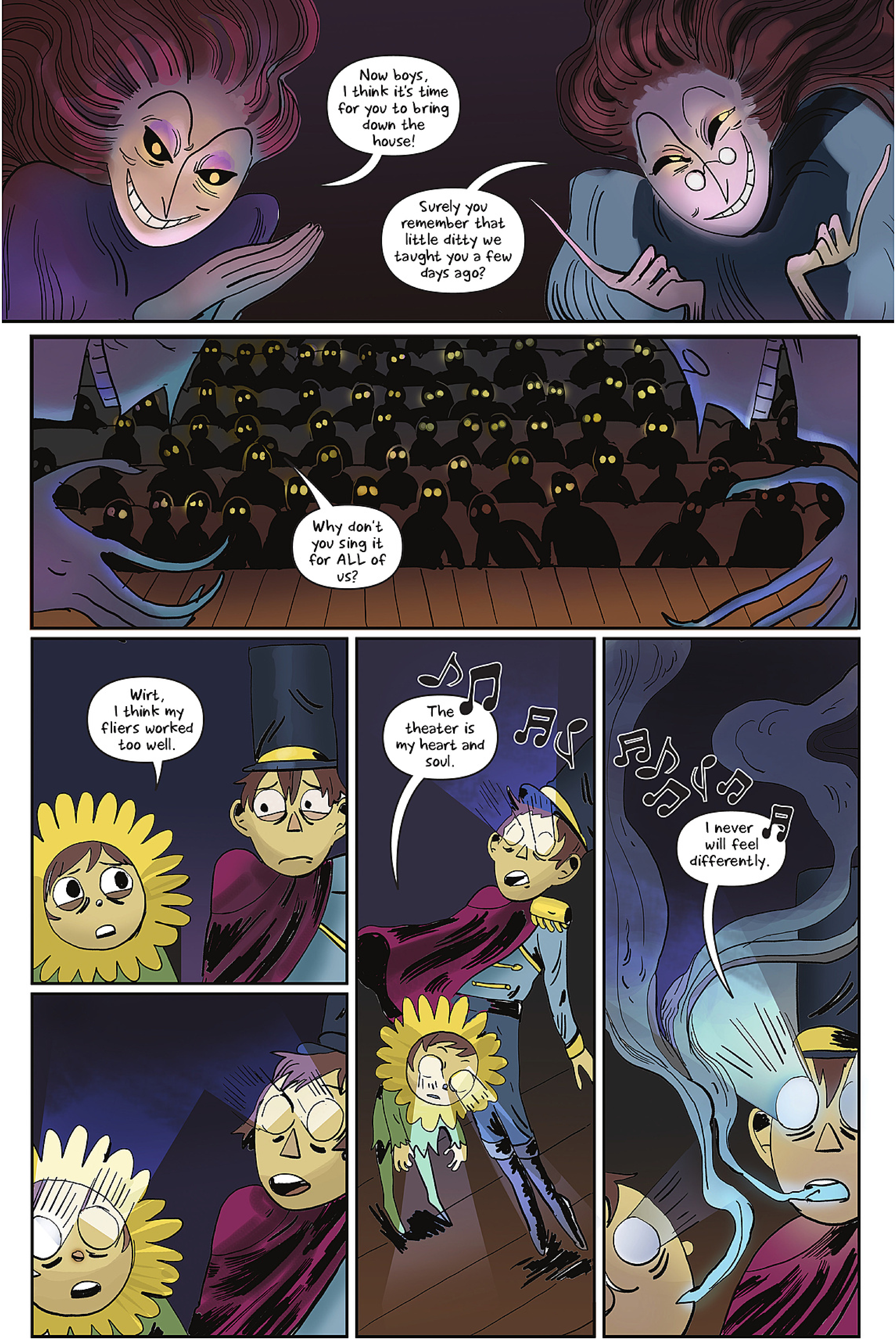
CHAPTER FIVE

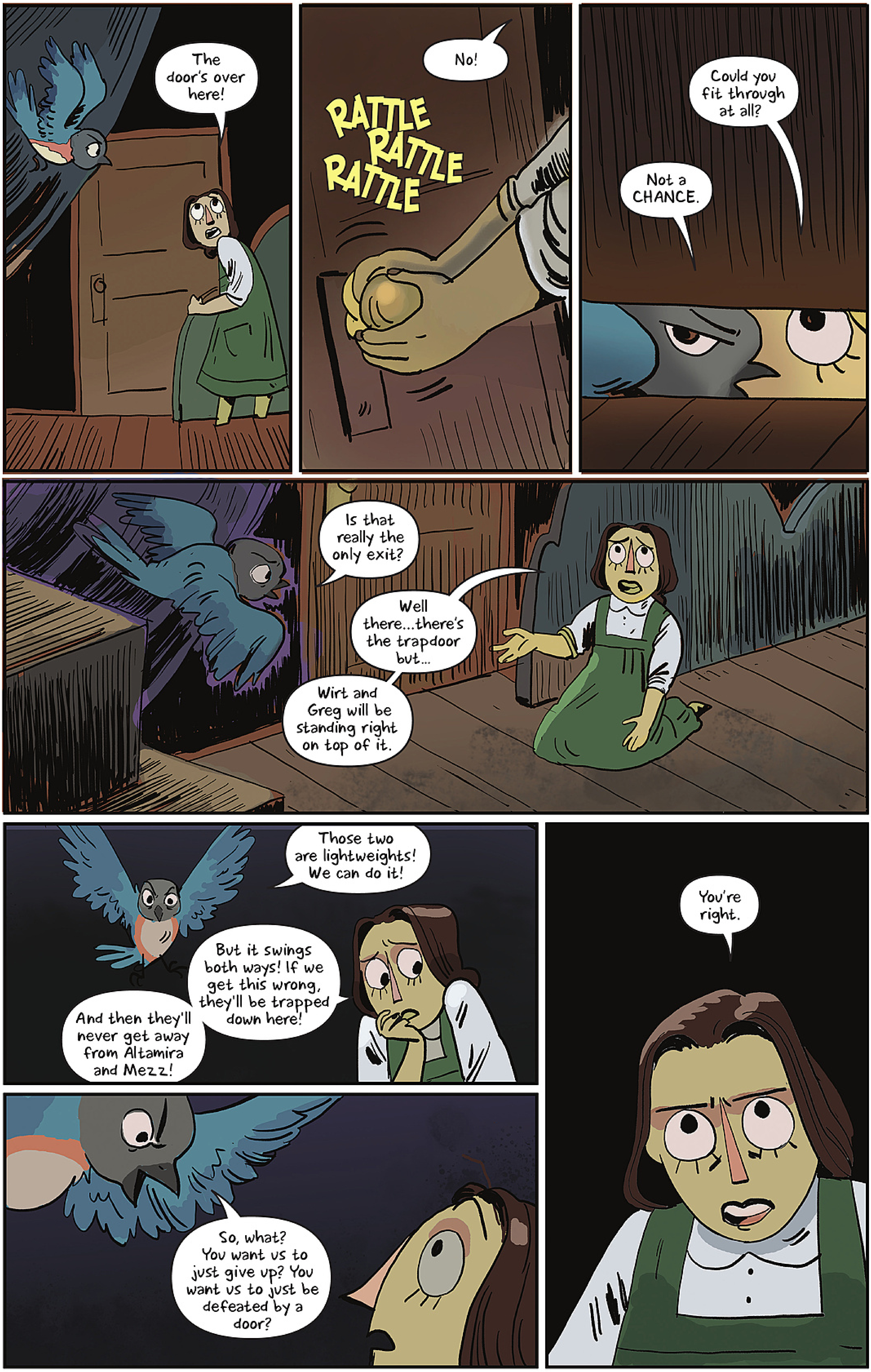

What's happening?
It's starting!
If they finish their final song, Wirt and Greg will be Altamira and Mezz's forever!
Let's get a move on, then!
Huh?
AAAAHHHH!!!
WIRT!
GREG!

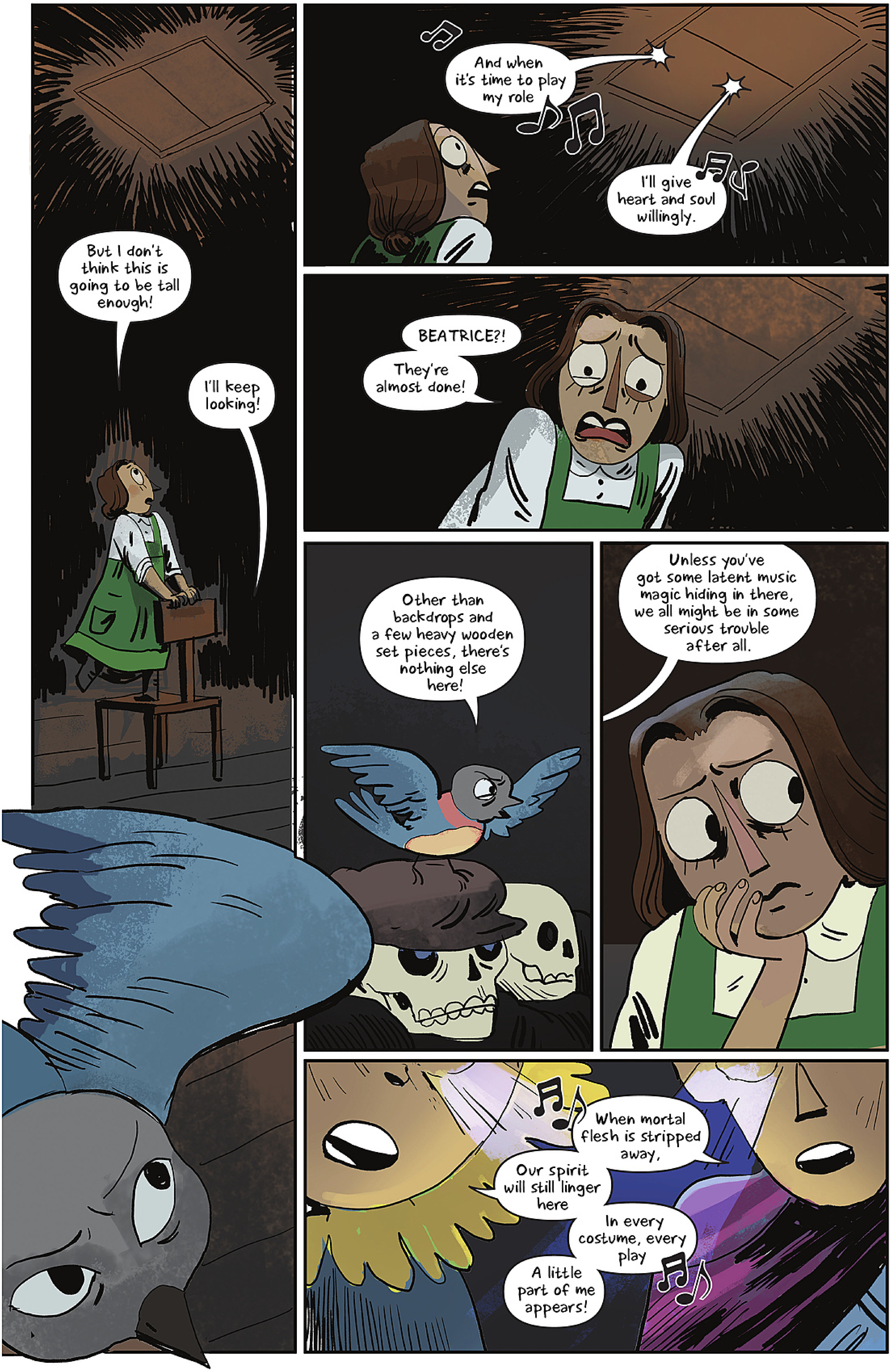

Hear us in our mournful sound,
Take care, you tread on hallowed ground!
Come and join this dread choral,
This symphony where souls are bound!
The bones of all who've come before
Lie scattered 'neath this very floor!
Entranced mortals unlucky,
Take comfort, you'll have company!
THAT'S ENOUGH!

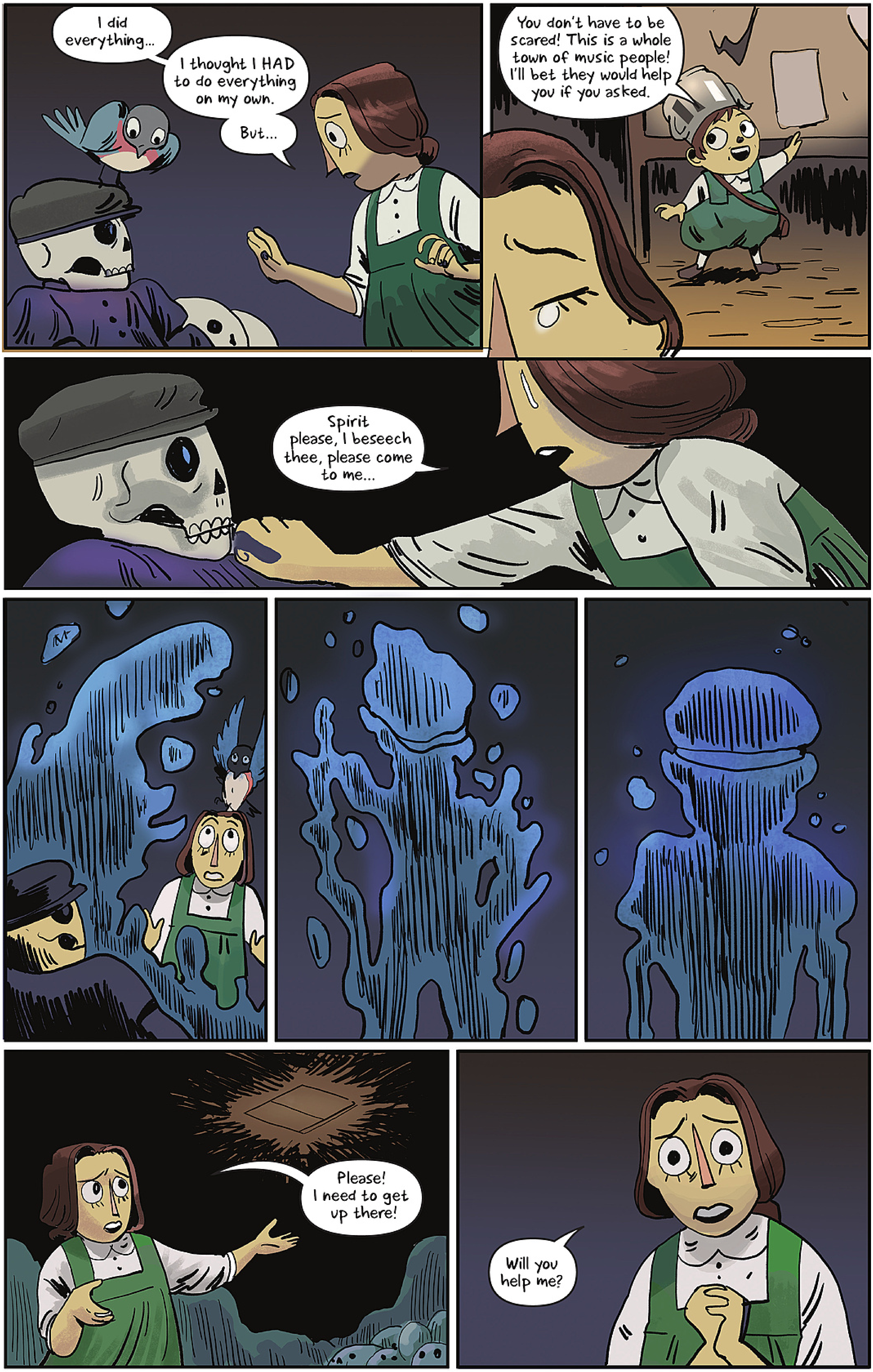

Now boys, there's no need to get stage fright!
That's ok! I'm more scared of you!
Wh-what are you gonna do with us?
Do? There's nothing to do, Wirt.
It's already been done.
HOBBY SONG
Wirt? I don't feel so good.
W-whatever it is you're doing, you need to stop doing it! Right now!

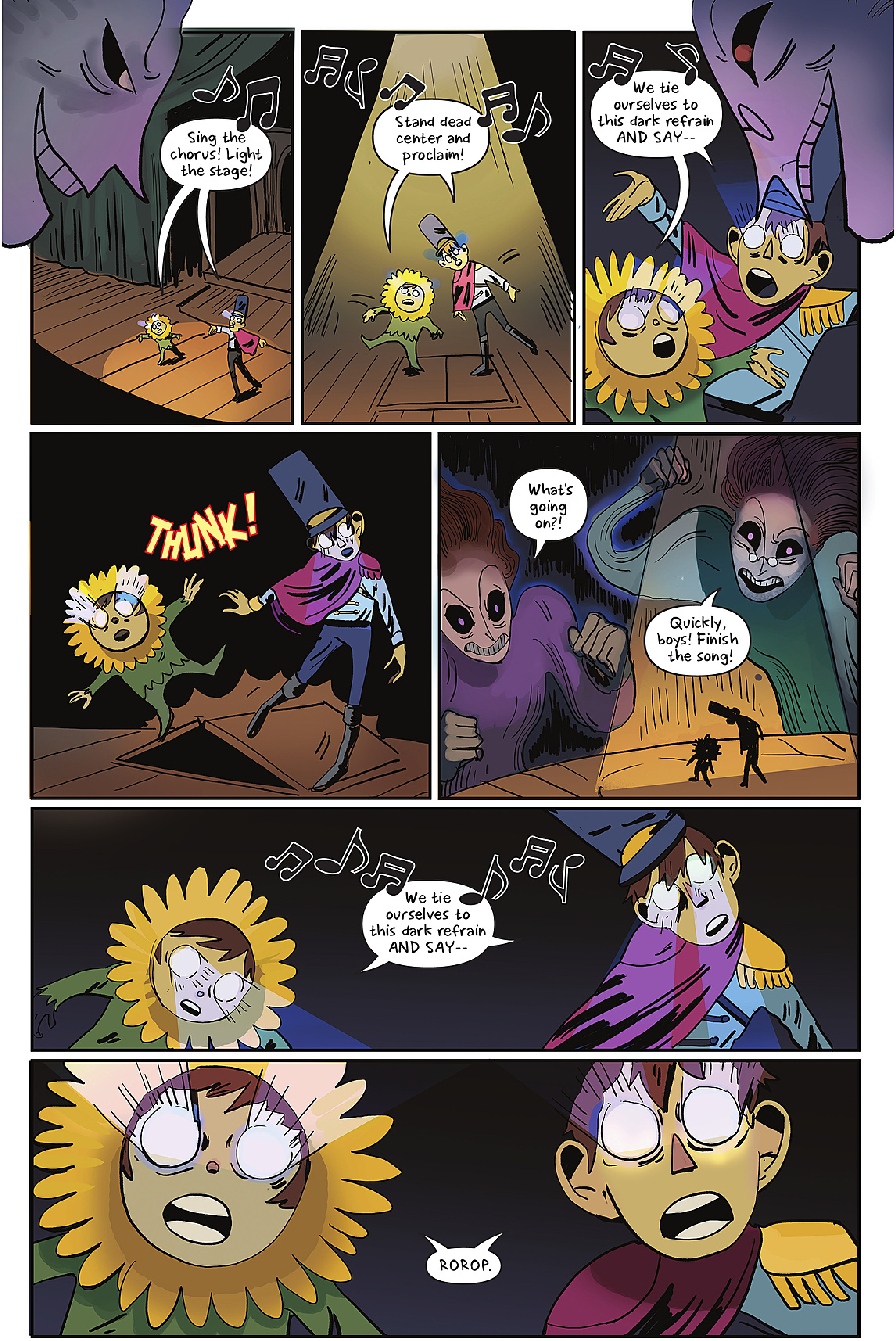

That bravado doesn't fool us, Wirt!
GASP!
I know I'm not a hero--I'm a lost kid at the best.
HAHAHAHAHA!

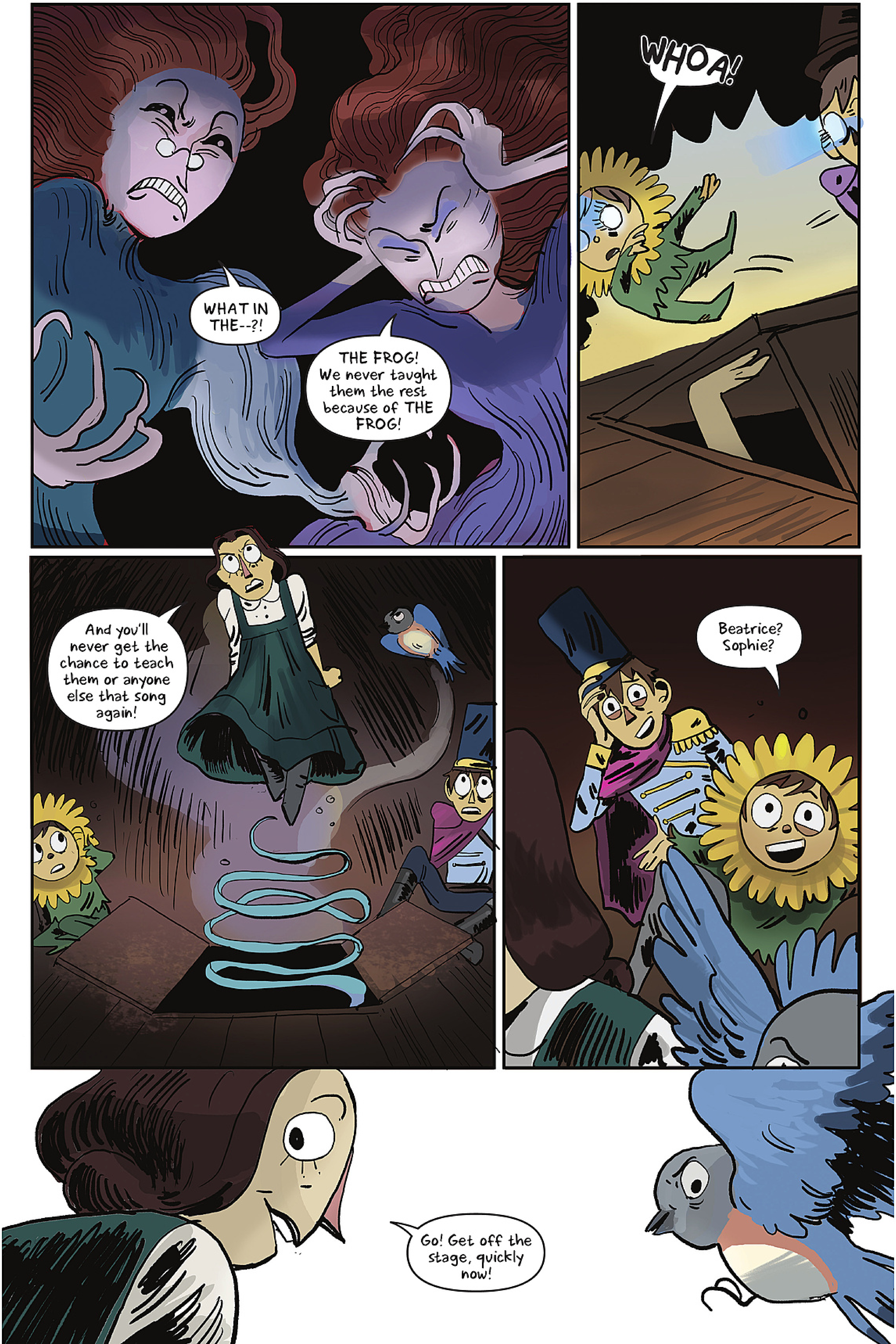

Now boys, I think it's time for you to bring down the house!
Surely you remember that little ditty we taught you a few days ago?
Why don't you sing it for ALL of us?
Wirt, I think my fliers worked too well.
The theater is my heart and soul.
I never will feel differently.

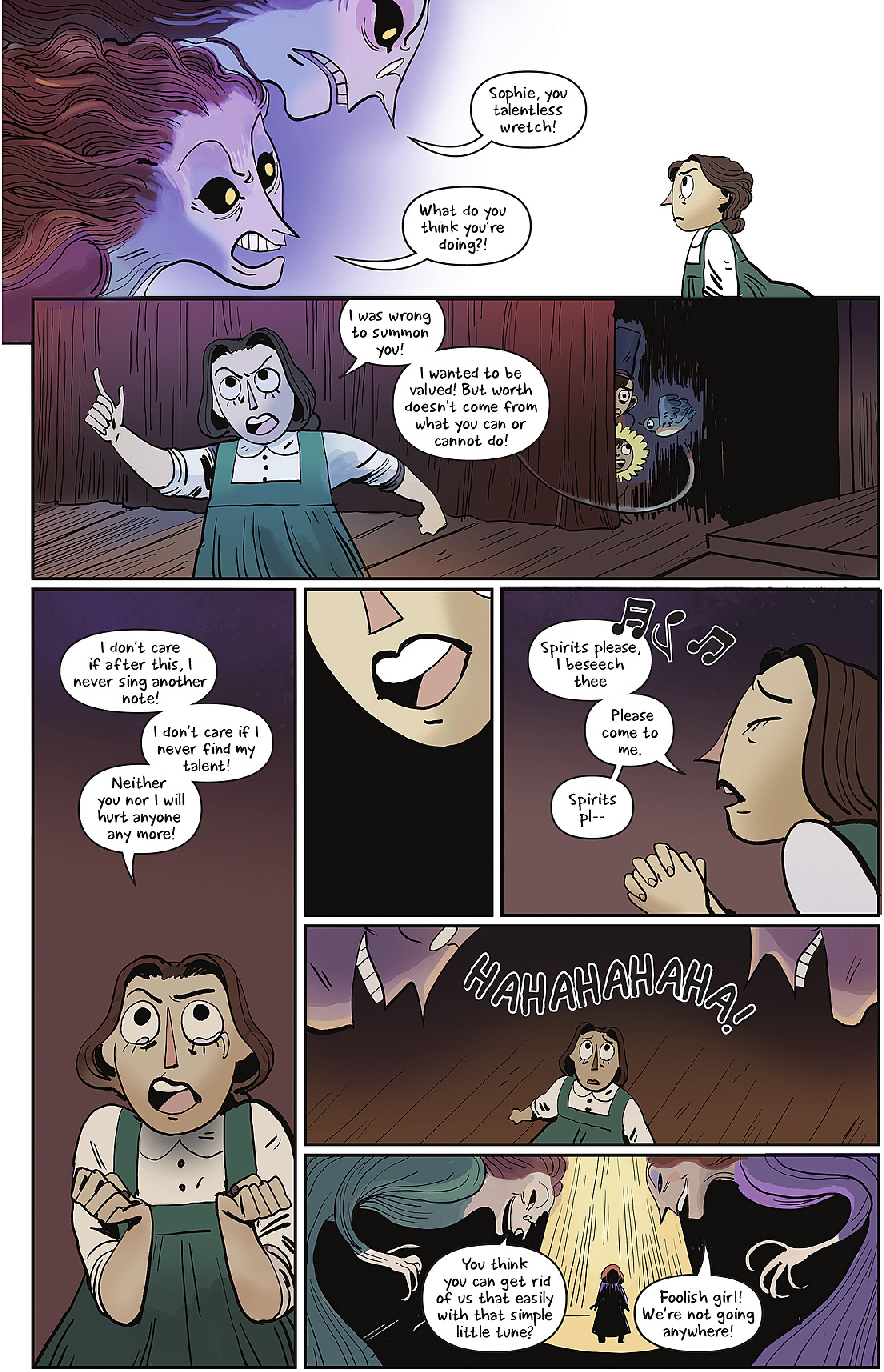

The door's over here!
No!
RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE
Could you fit through at all?
Not a CHANCE.
Is that really the only exit?
Well there...there's the trapdoor but...
Wirt and Greg will be standing right on top of it.
Those two are lightweights! We can do it!
But it swings both ways! If we get this wrong, they'll be trapped down here!
And then they'll never get away from Altamira and Mezz!
So, what? You want us to just give up? You want us to just be defeated by a door?
You're right.

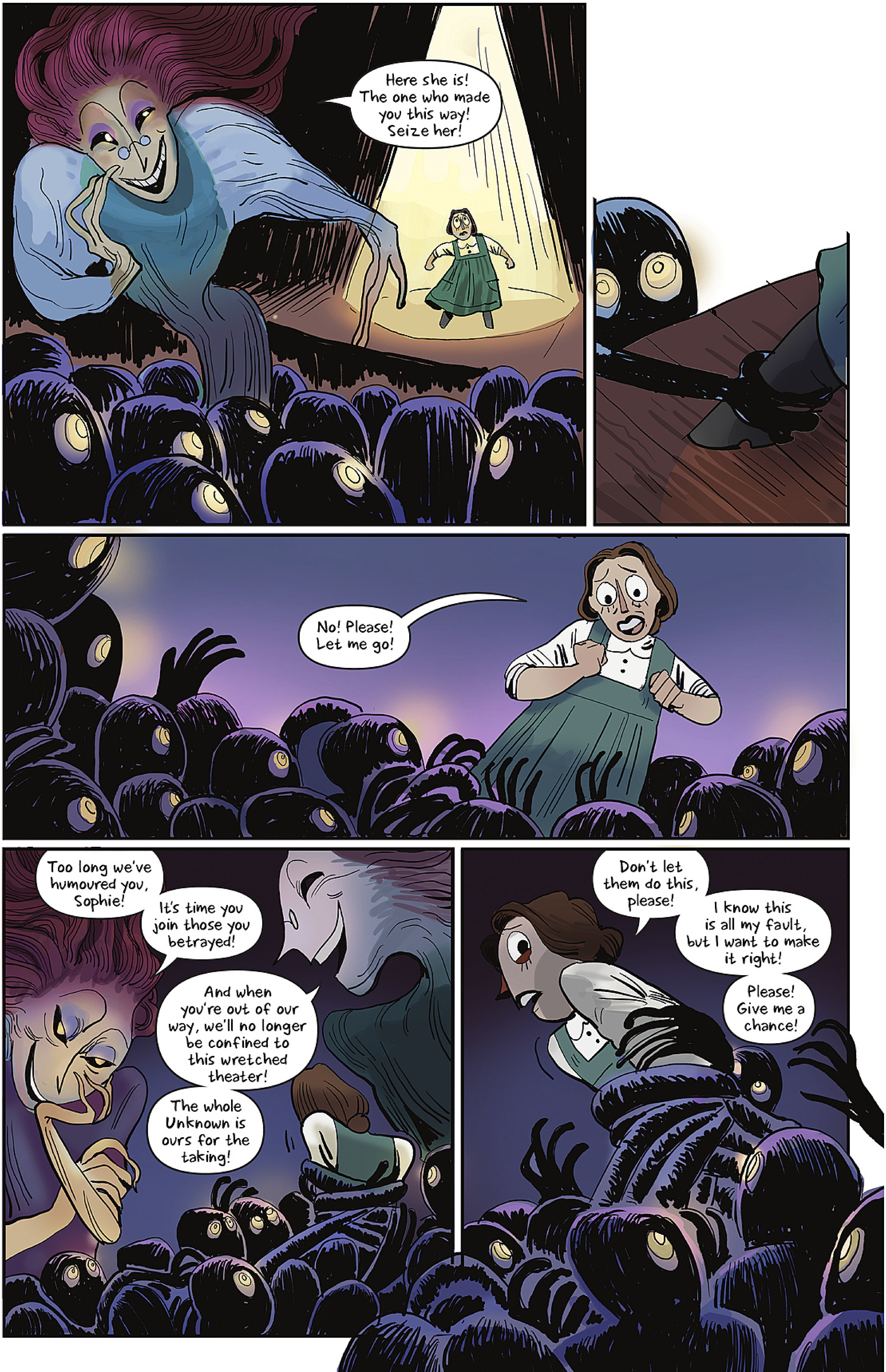

But I don't think this is going to be tall enough!
I'll keep looking!
And when it's time to play my role
I'll give heart and soul willingly.
BEATRICE?!
They're almost done!
Other than backdrops and a few heavy wooden set pieces, there's nothing else here!
Unless you've got some latent music magic hiding in there, we all might be in some serious trouble after all.
When mortal flesh is stripped away,
Our spirit will still linger here
In every costume, every play
A little part of me appears!

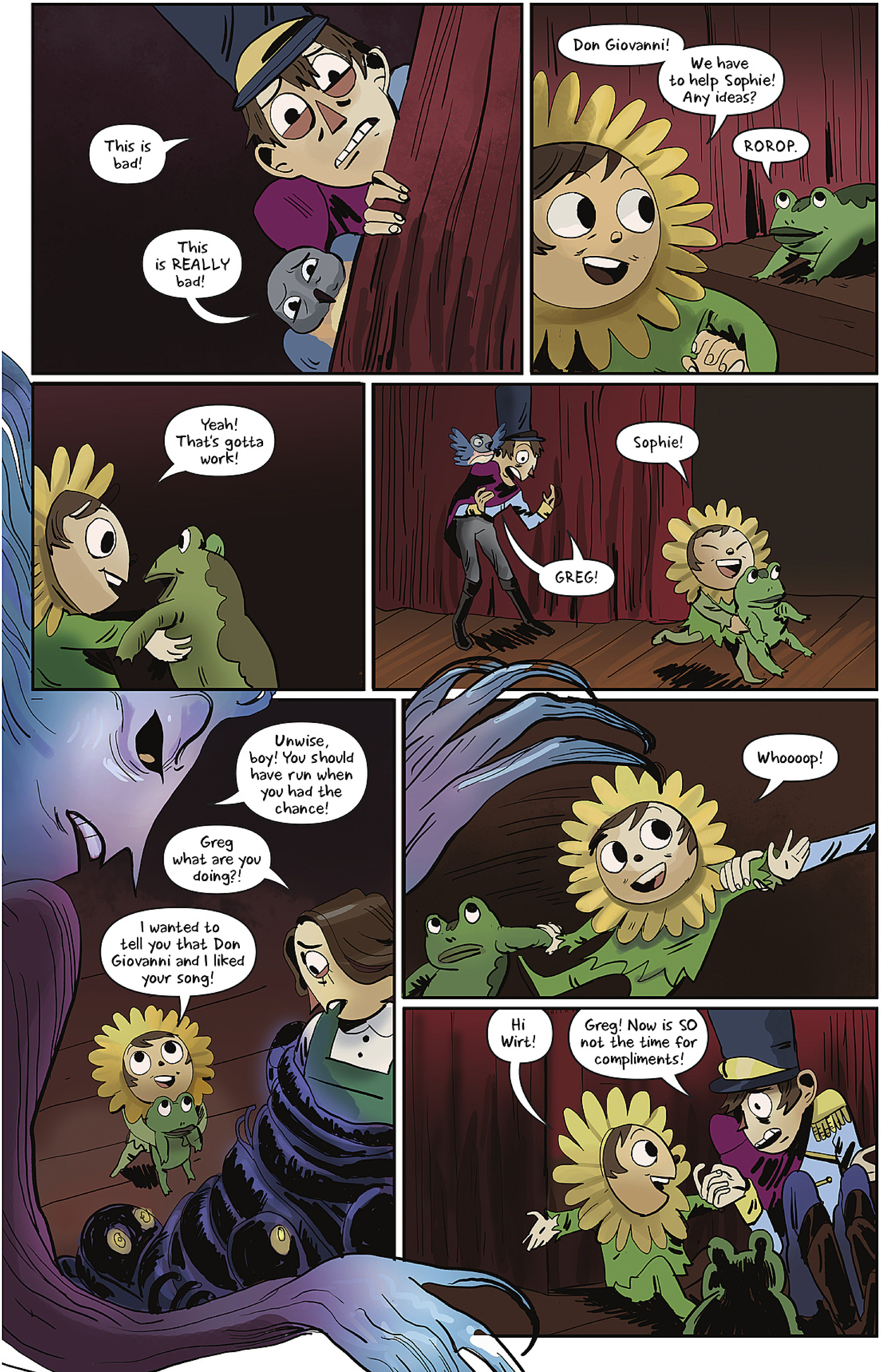

I did everything...
I thought I HAD to do everything on my own.
But...
You don't have to be scared! This is a whole town of music people! I'll bet they would help you if you asked.
Spirit please, I beseech thee, please come to me...
Please! I need to get up there!
Will you help me?

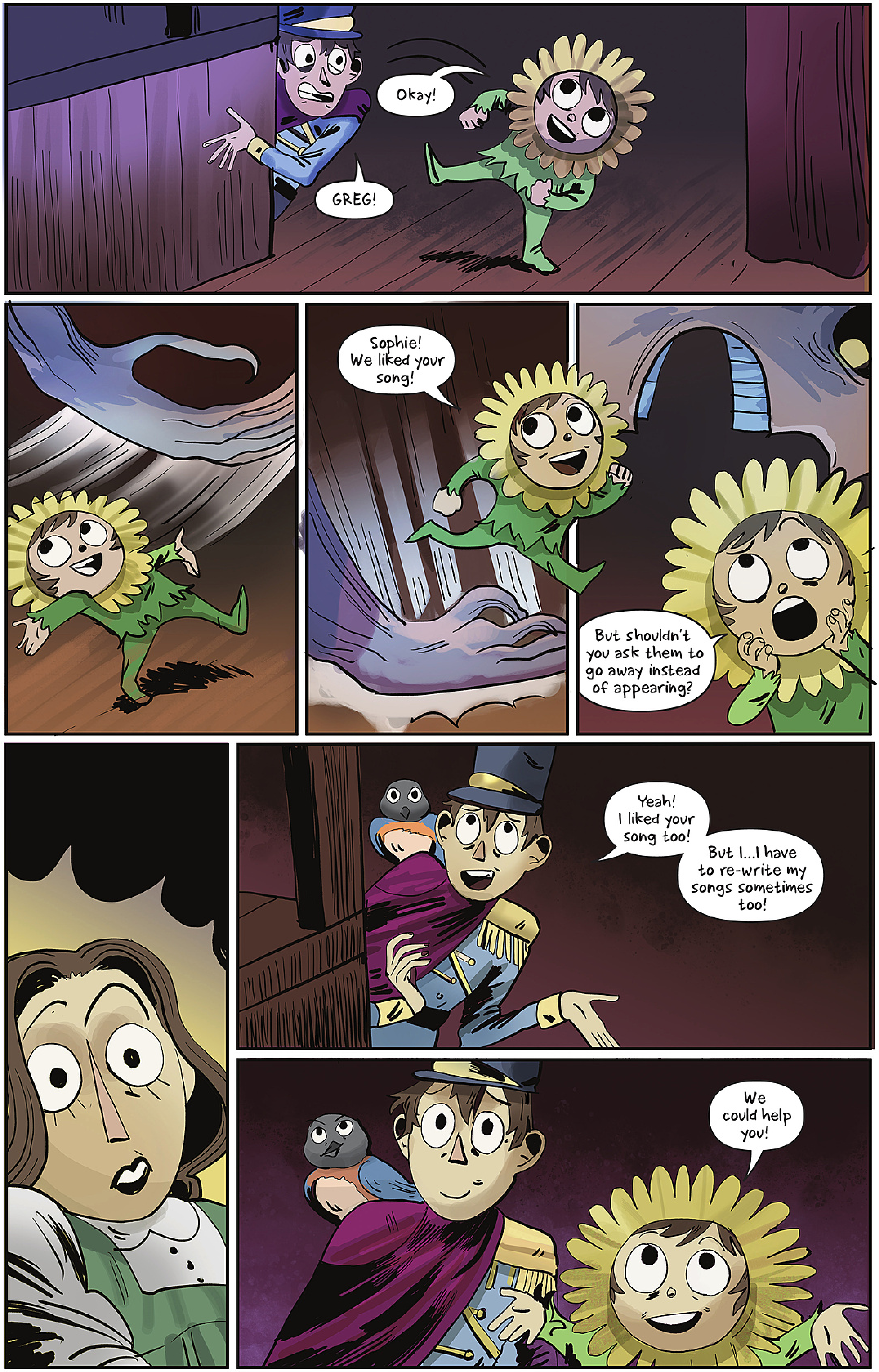

Sing the chorus! Light the stage!
Stand dead center and proclaim!
We tie ourselves to this dark refrain AND SAY--
THUNK!
What's going on?!
Quickly, boys! Finish the song!
We tie ourselves to this dark refrain AND SAY--
ROROP.

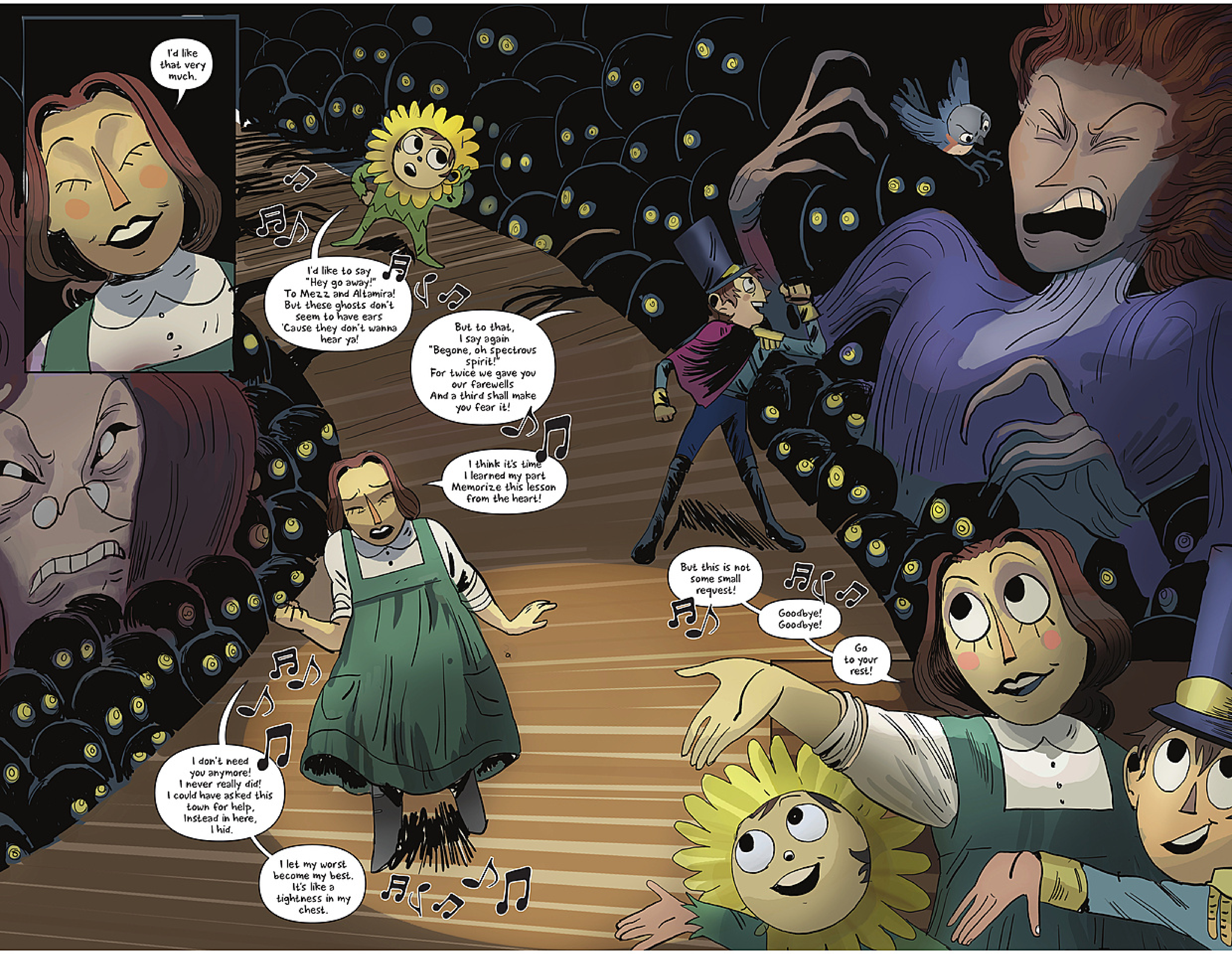

WHAT IN THE--?!
THE FROG! We never taught them the rest because of THE FROG!
WHOA!
And you'll never get the chance to teach them or anyone else that song again!
Beatrice? Sophie?
Go! Get off the stage, quickly now!

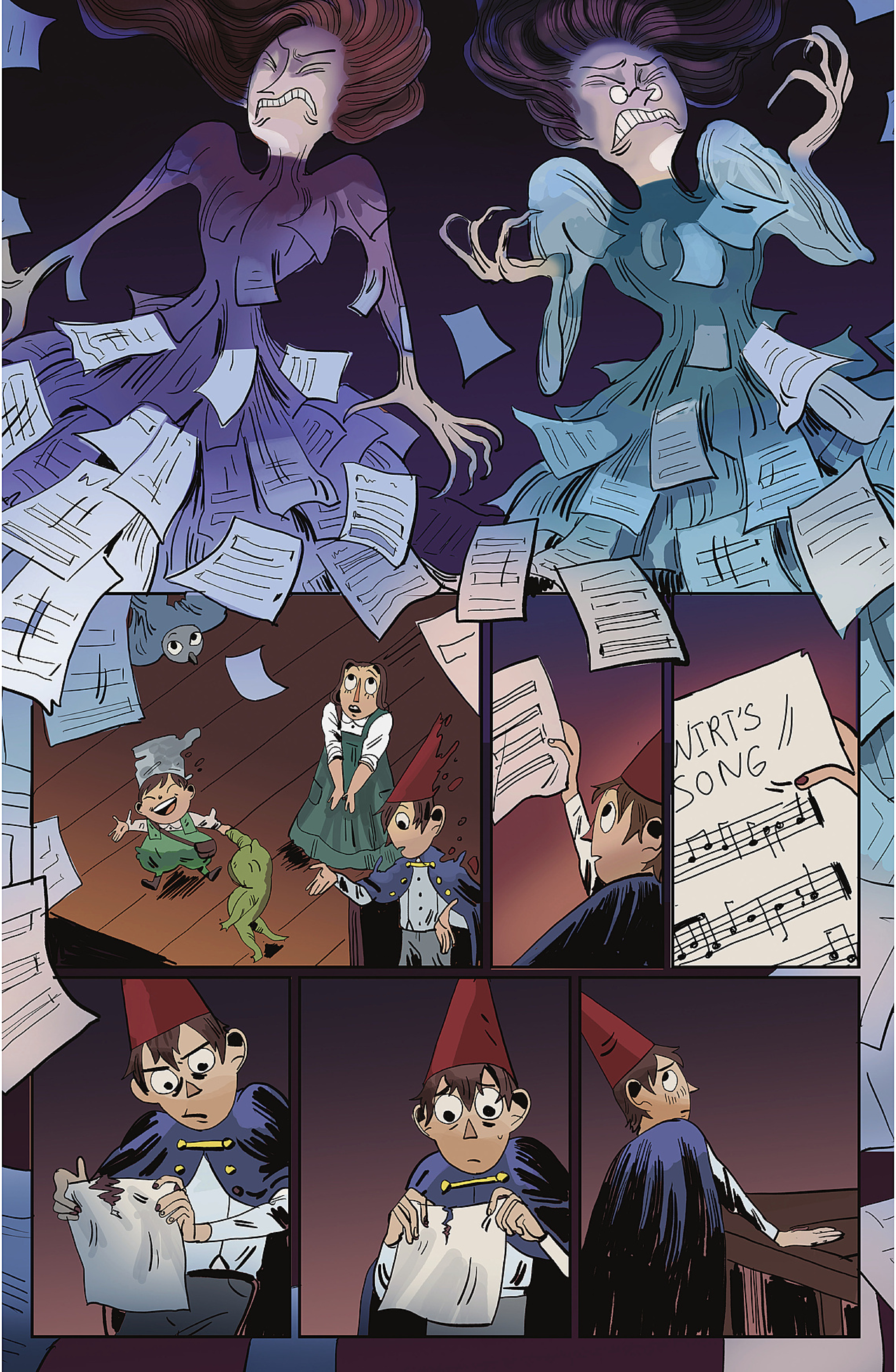

Sophie, you talentless wretch!
What do you think you're doing?!
I was wrong to summon you!
I wanted to be valued! But worth doesn't come from what you can or cannot do!
I don't care if after this, I never sing another note!
I don't care if I never find my talent!
Neither you nor I will hurt anyone any more!
Spirits please, I beseech thee
Please come to me.
Spirits pl--
HAHAHAHAHA!
You think you can get rid of us that easily with that simple little tune?
Foolish girl! We're not going anywhere!

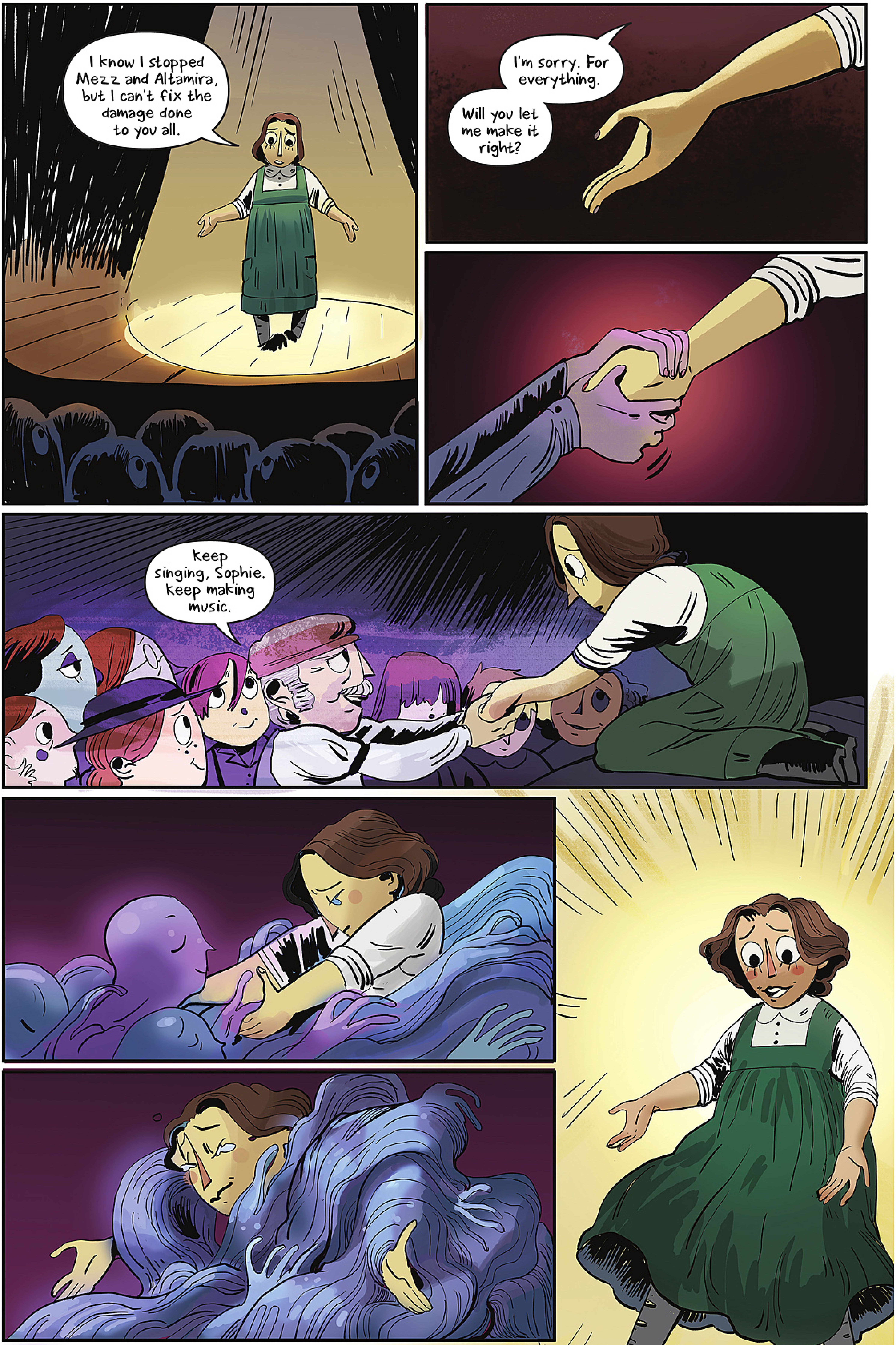

Here she is! The one who made you this way! Seize her!
No! Please! Let me go!
Too long we've humoured you, Sophie!
It's time you join those you betrayed!
And when you're out of our way, we'll no longer be confined to this wretched theater!
The whole Unknown is ours for the taking!
Don't let them do this, please!
I know this is all my fault, but I want to make it right!
Please! Give me a chance!

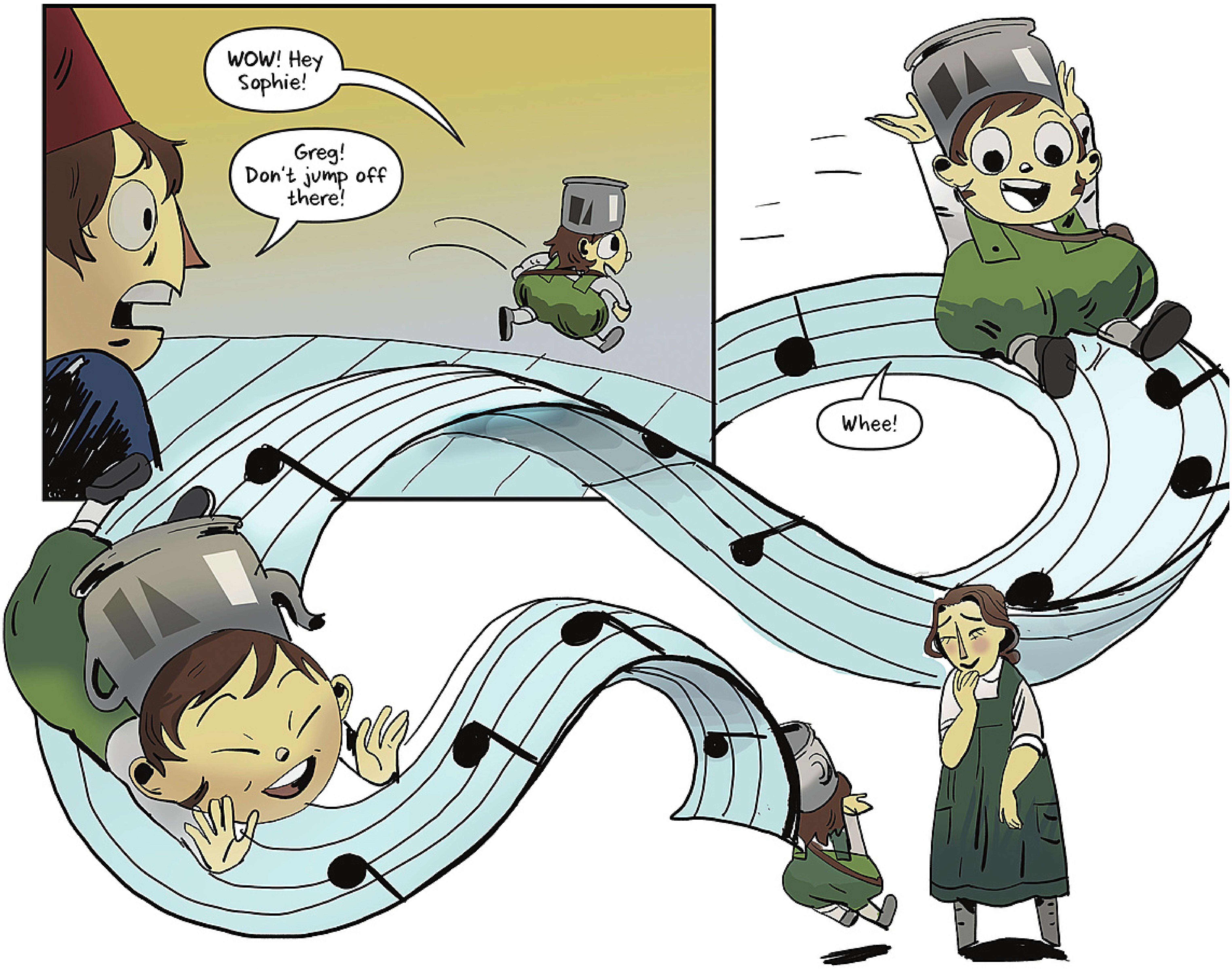

This is bad!
This is REALLY bad!
Don Giovanni!
We have to help Sophie! Any ideas?
ROROP.
Yeah! That's gotta work!
Sophie!
GREG!
Unwise, boy! You should have run when you had the chance!
Greg what are you doing?!
I wanted to tell you that Don Giovanni and I liked your song!
Whoooop!
Hi Wirt!
Greg! Now is SO not the time for compliments!

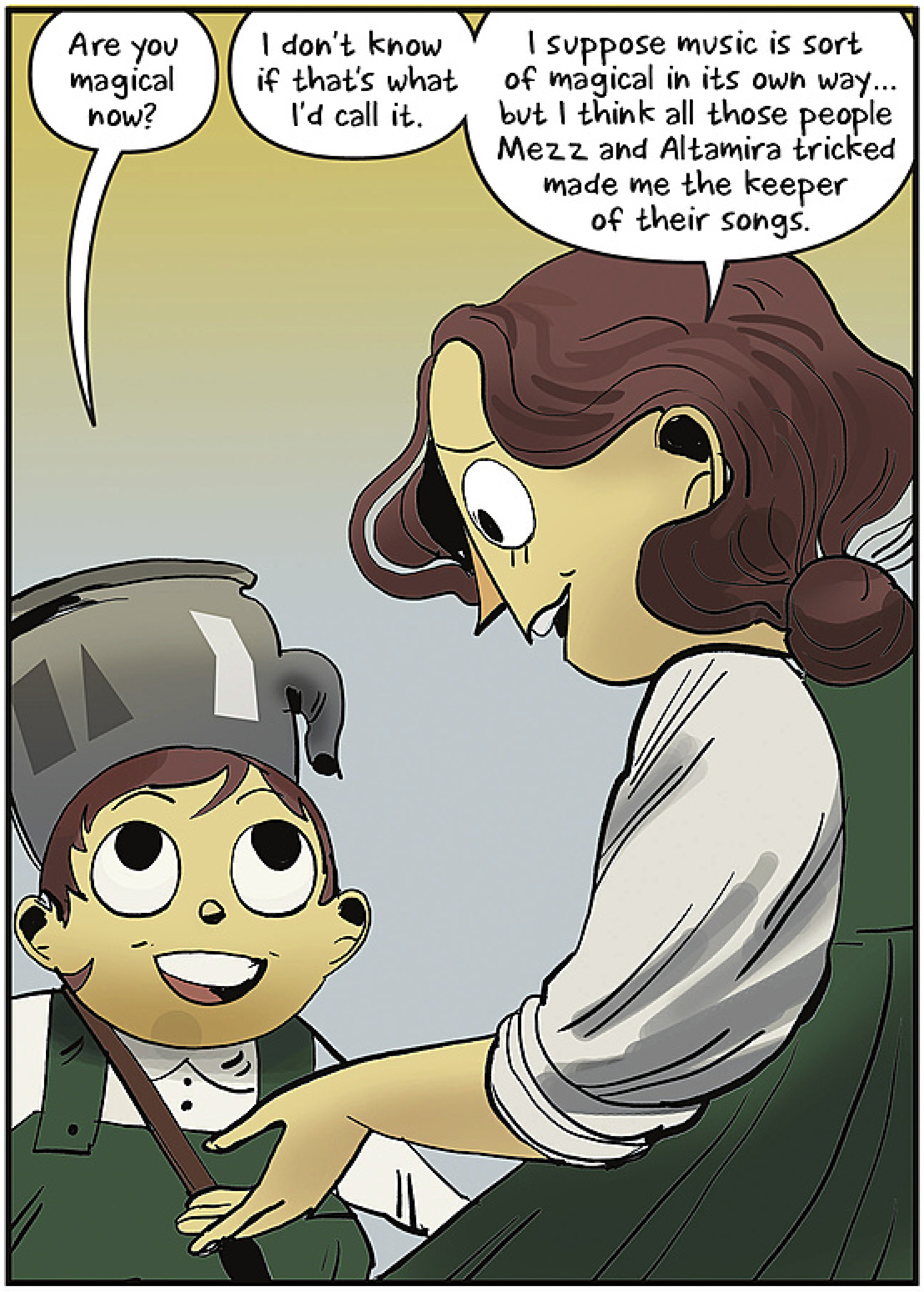

Okay!
GREG!
Sophie! We liked your song!
But shouldn't you ask them to go away instead of appearing?
Yeah! I liked your song too!
But I...I have to re-write my songs sometimes too!
We could help you!

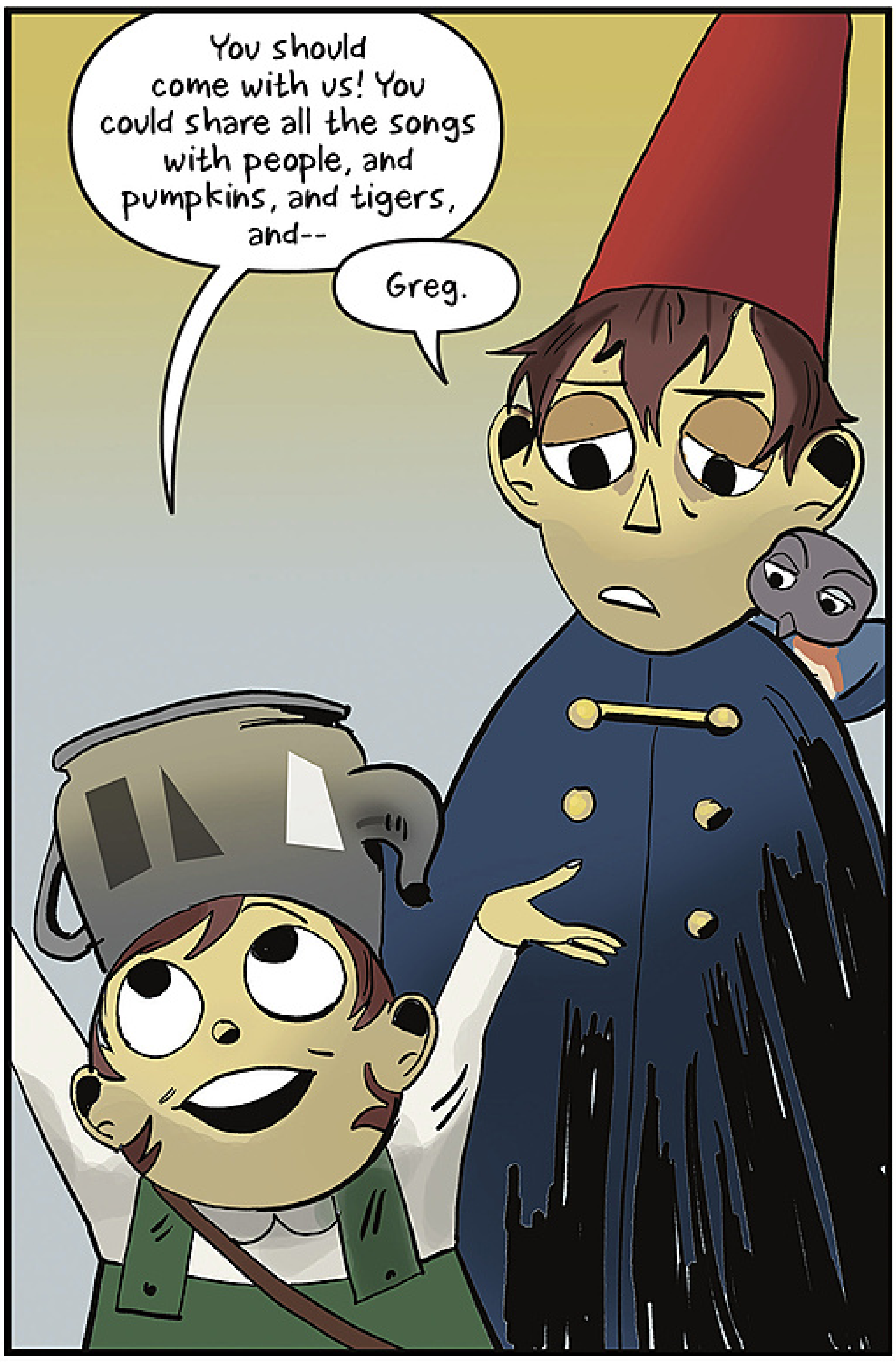

I'd like that very much.
I'd like to say "Hey go away!" To Mezz and Altamira! But these ghosts don't seem to have ears 'Cause they don't wanna hear ya!
But to that, I say again "Begone, oh spectrous spirit!" For twice we gave you our farewells And a third shall make you fear it!
I think it's time I learned my part Memorize this lesson from the heart!
I don't need you anymore! I never really did! I could have asked this town for help, Instead in here, I hid.
I let my worst become my best. It's like a tightness in my chest.
But this is not some small request!
Goodbye! Goodbye!
Go to your rest!

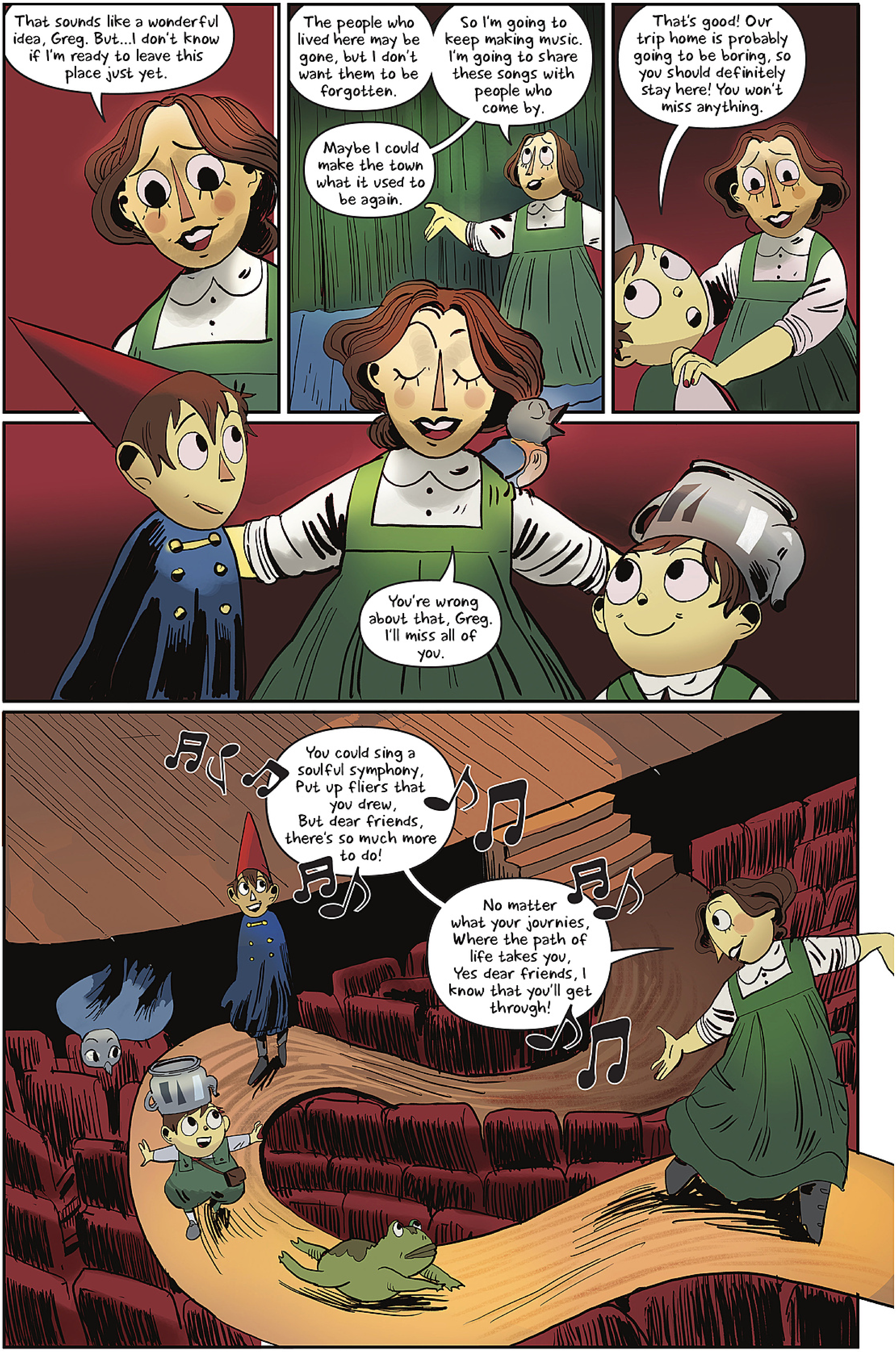

WIRT'S
SONG

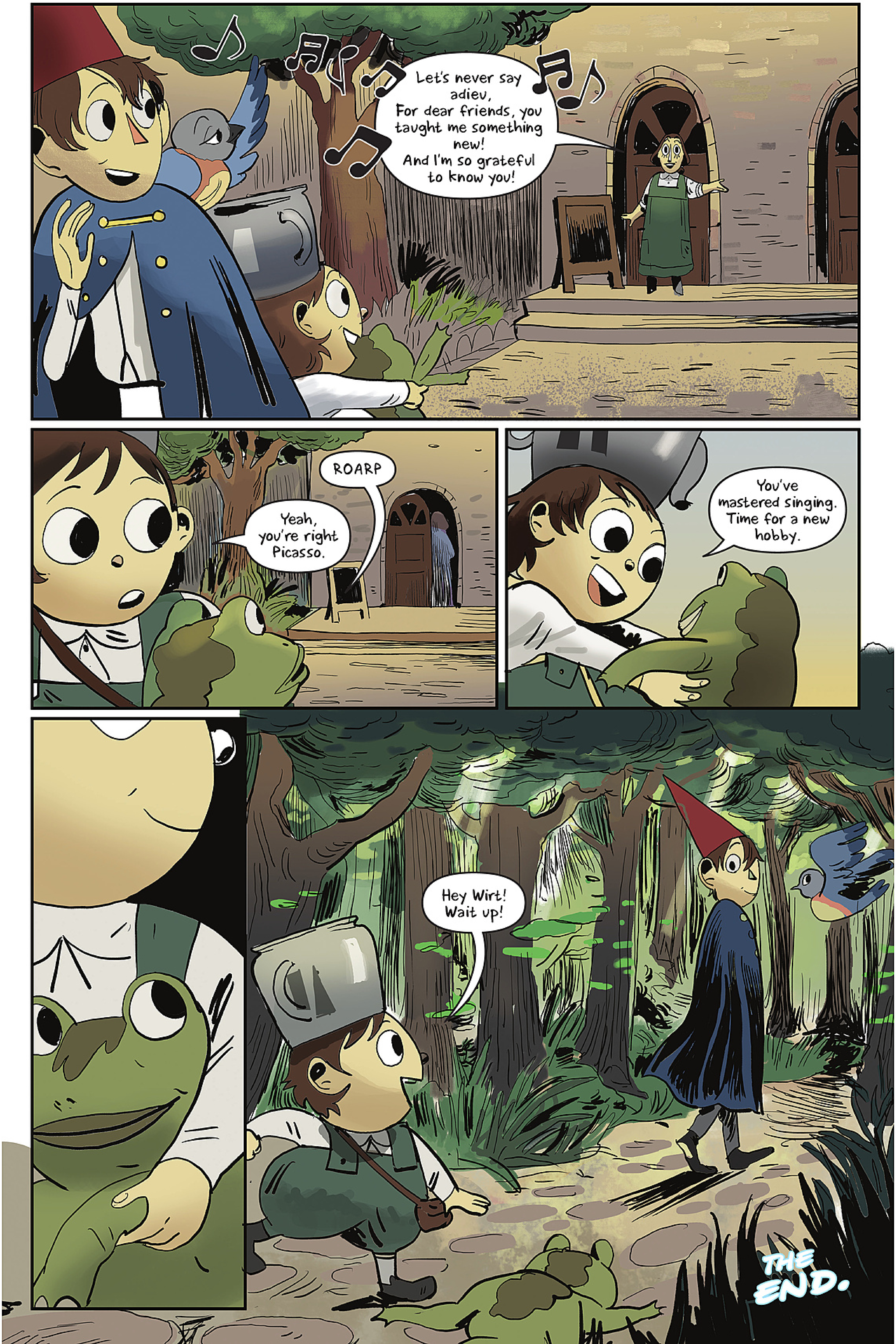

I know I stopped Mezz and Altamira, but I can't fix the damage done to you all.
I'm sorry. For everything.
Will you let me make it right?
keep singing, Sophie. keep making music.


WOW! Hey Sophie!
Greg! Don't jump off there!
Whee!


Are you magical now?
I don't know if that's what I'd call it.
I suppose music is sort of magical in its own way... but I think all those people Mezz and Altamira tricked made me the keeper of their songs.


You should come with us! You could share all the songs with people, and pumpkins, and tigers, and--
Greg.


That sounds like a wonderful idea, Greg. But...I don't know if I'm ready to leave this place just yet.
The people who lived here may be gone, but I don't want them to be forgotten.
So I'm going to keep making music. I'm going to share these songs with people who come by.
Maybe I could make the town what it used to be again.
That's good! Our trip home is probably going to be boring, so you should definitely stay here! You won't miss anything.
You're wrong about that, Greg. I'll miss all of you.
You could sing a soulful symphony, Put up fliers that you drew, But dear friends, there's so much more to do!
No matter what your journies, Where the path of life takes you, Yes dear friends, I know that you'll get through!


Let's never say adieu,
For dear friends, you taught me something new!
And I'm so grateful to know you!
ROARP
Yeah, you're right Picasso.
You've mastered singing. Time for a new hobby.
Hey Wirt! Wait up!
THE END.

COVER GALLERY

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Keezy Young

Issue #2 Main Cover by

Keezy Young

A FANTASMA THEATER PRODUCTION
DEBUTS THIS FALL
URING WIRT

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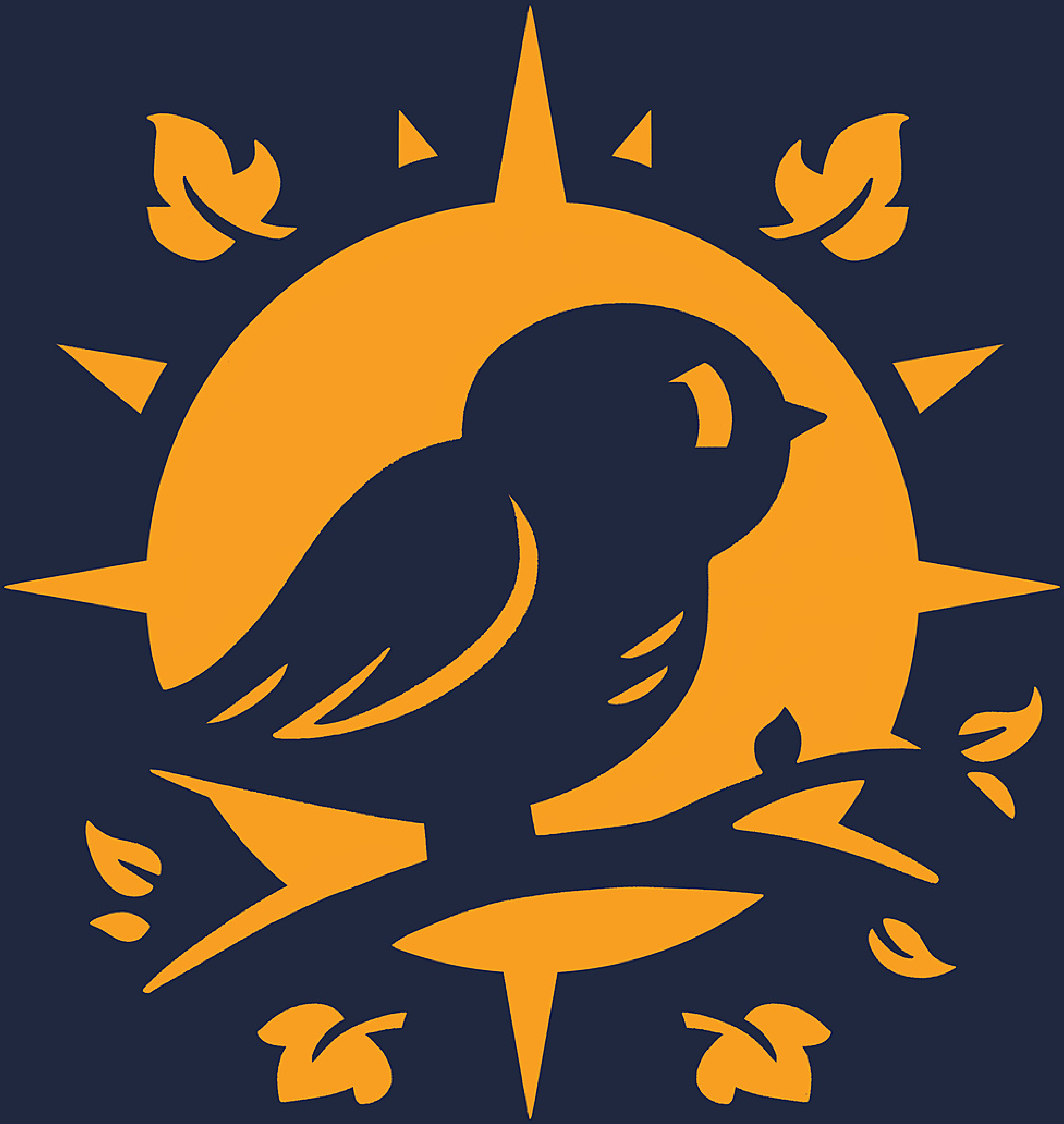

Issue #3 Pumpkin Stencil Cover by

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Issue #3 Pumpkin Stencil Cover by

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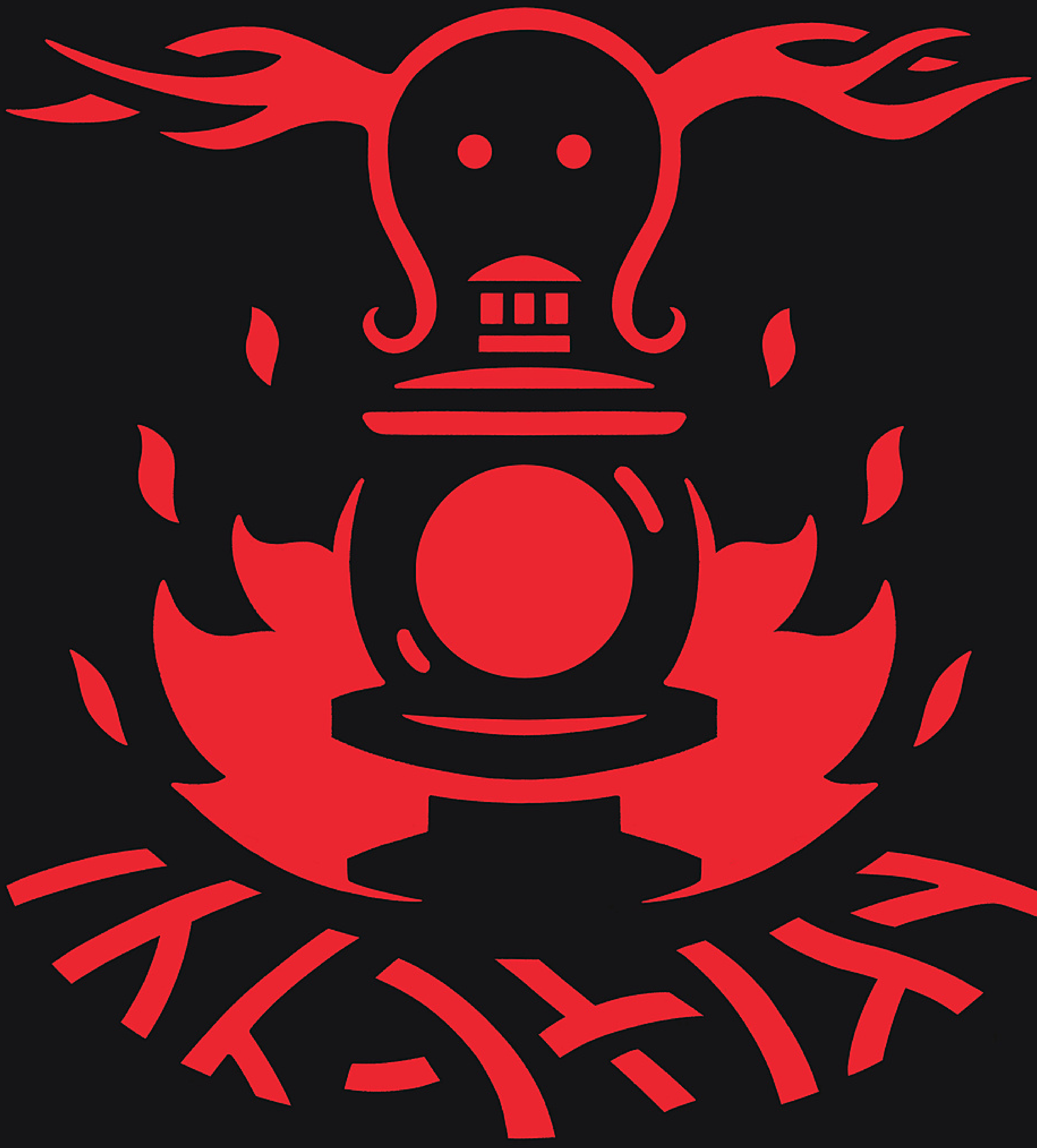

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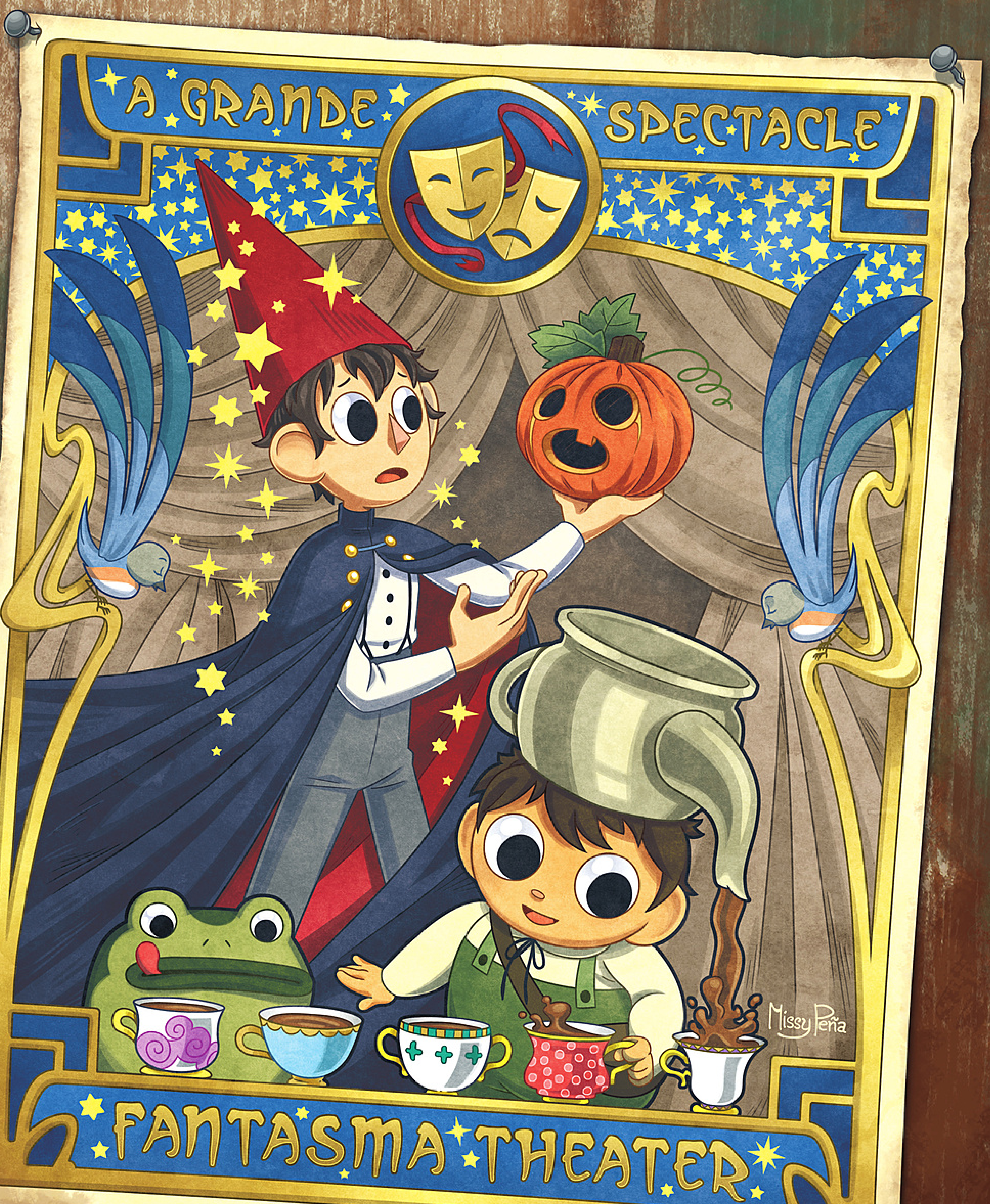
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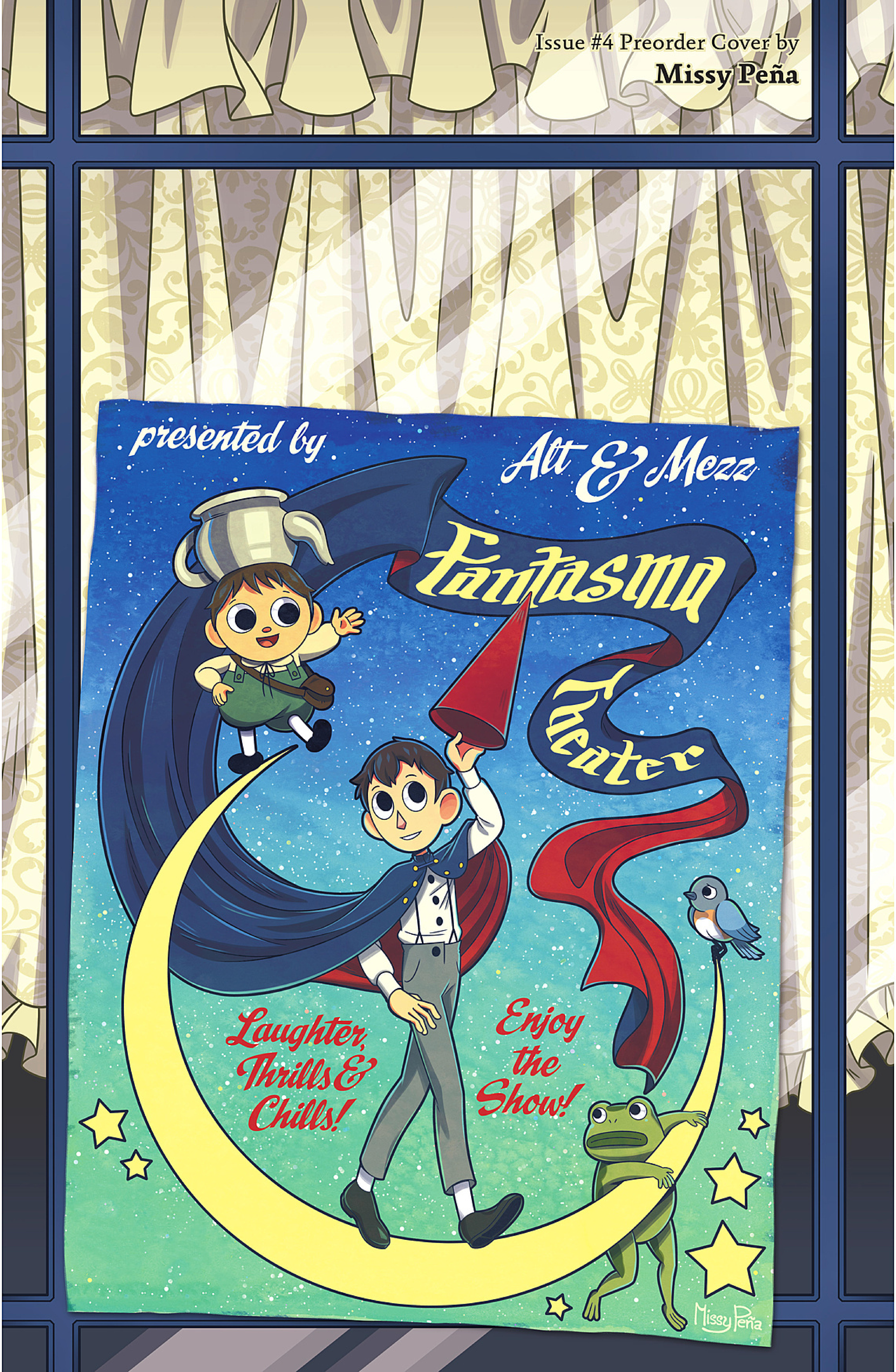
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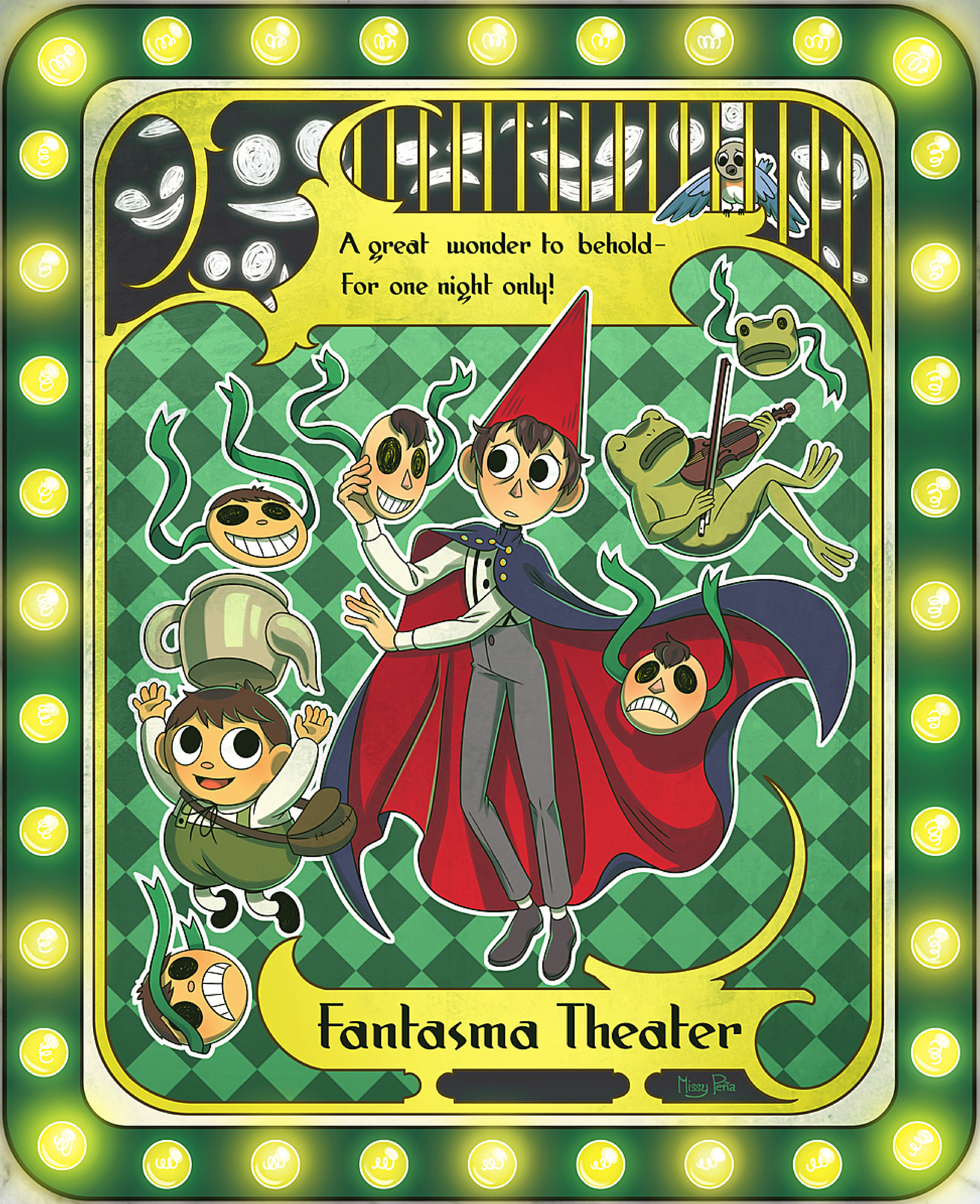
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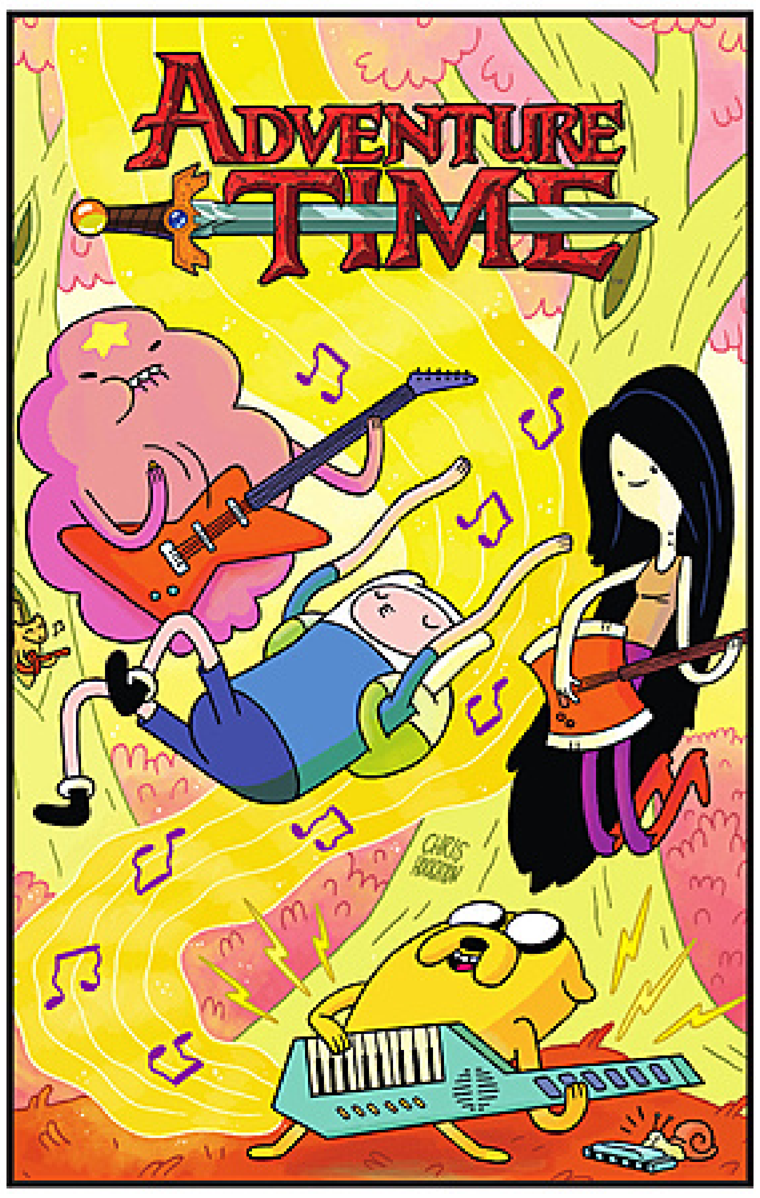

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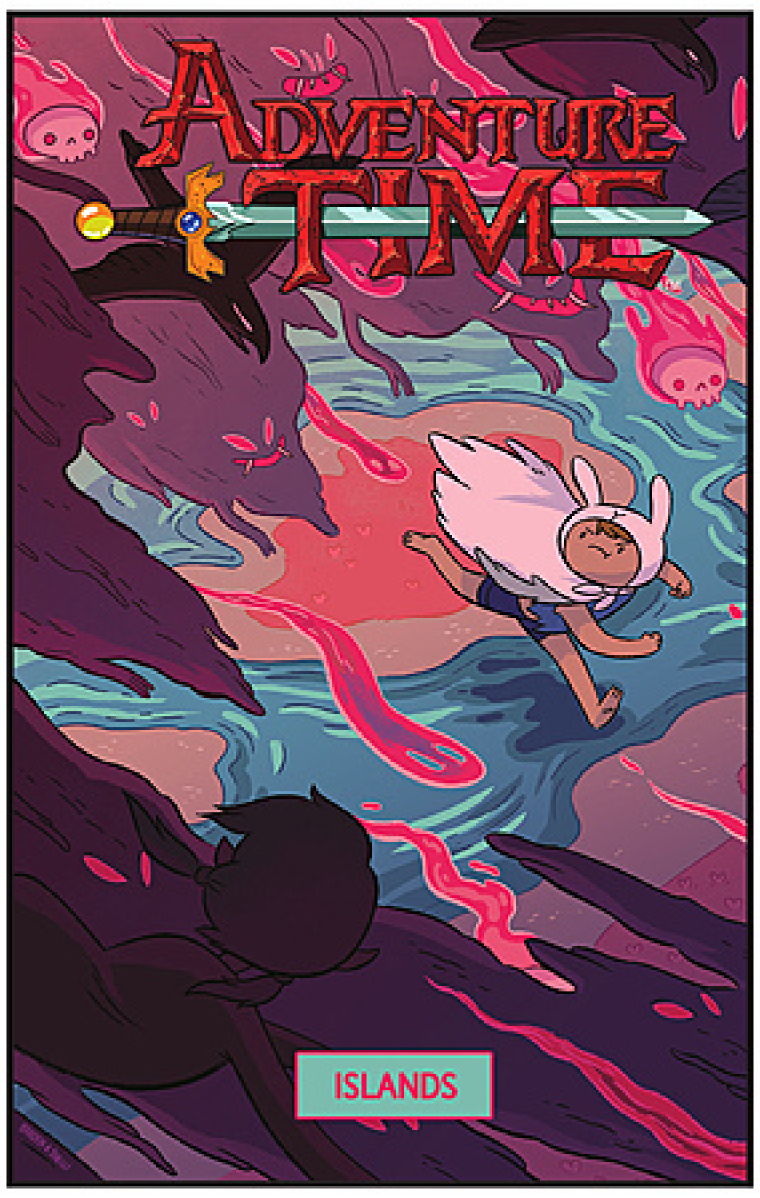
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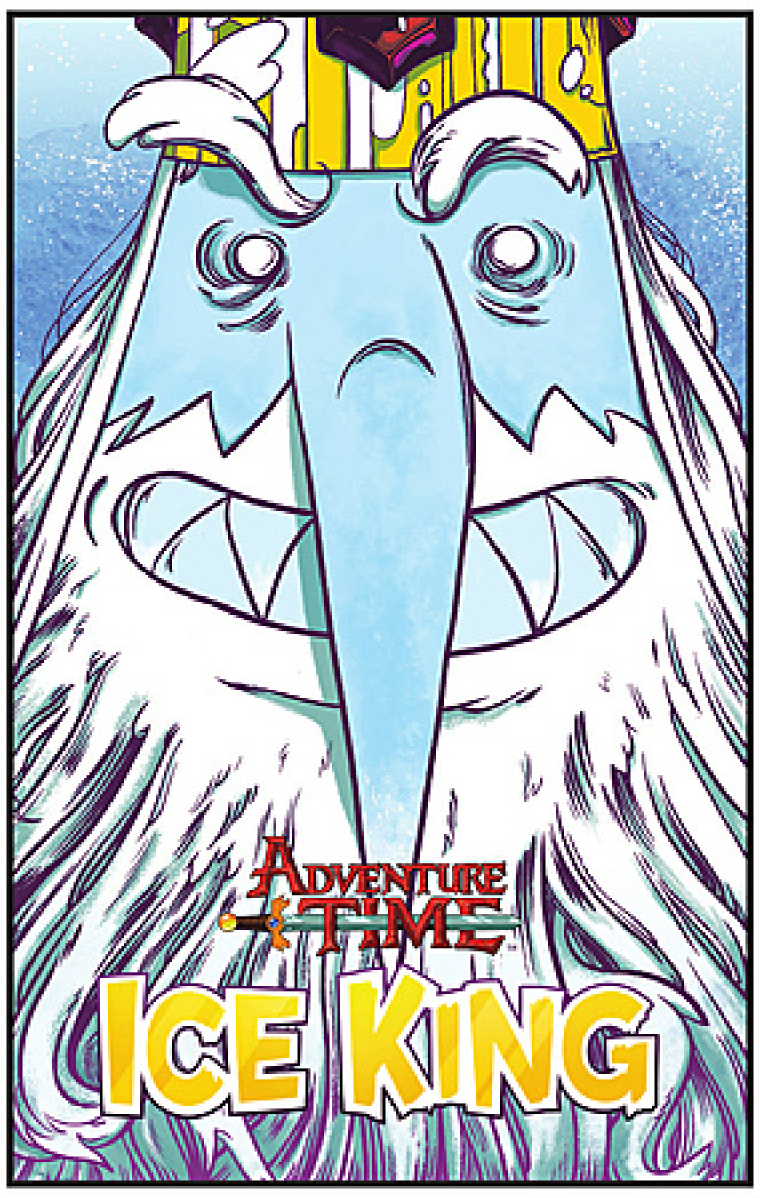
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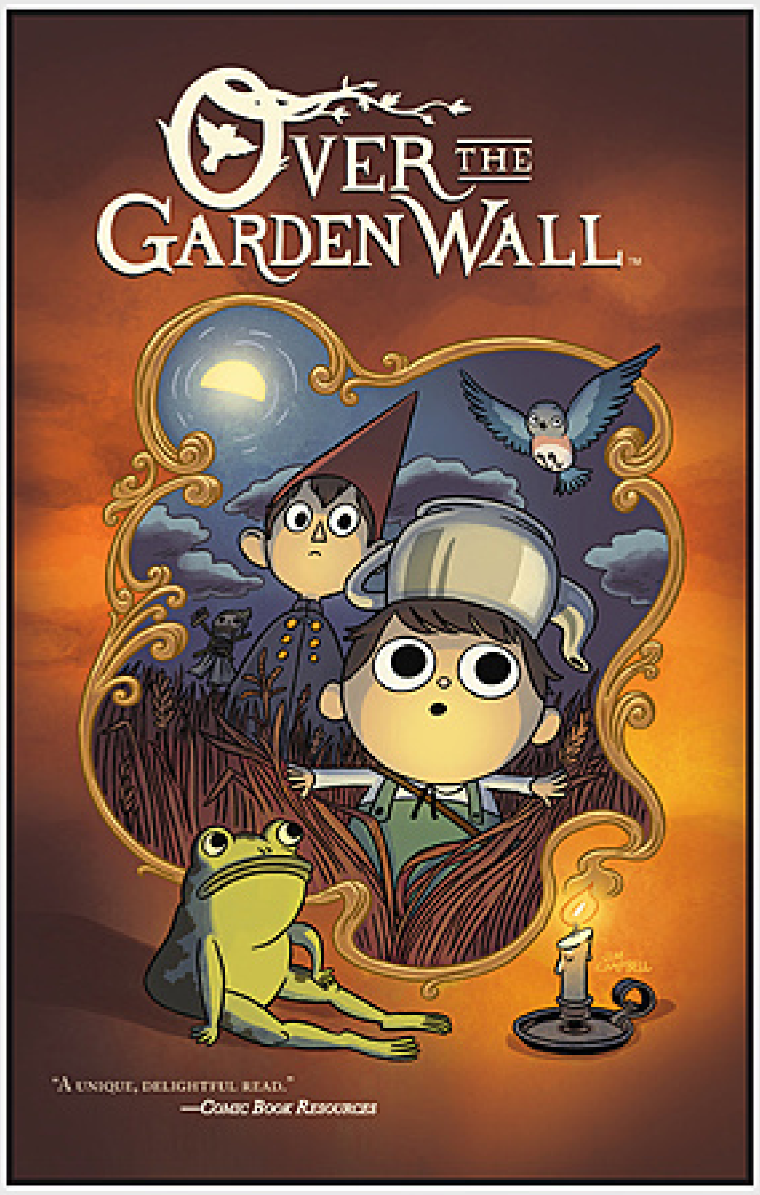
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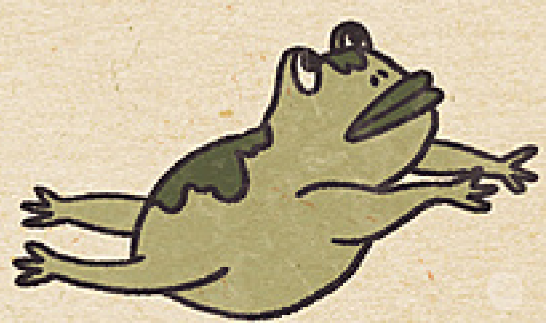

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